

10382

327

THE  
*Lay-Man's PLEAS*  
FOR  
SEPARATION  
FROM THE  
*Church of ENGLAND.*  
ANSWERED:

Wherein the Arguments of a late Pamphlet, Entitl'd LAY-NONCONFORMITY Justified, are Examin'd and Censur'd.

In a Dialogue between a Gentleman in the Communion of the *Church of ENGLAND*, who was formerly a *Dissenter*; and his Friend, who was Educated in the Communion of the *Church*, but has since left it.

---

Mr. Baxter's Reasons for the *Christian Religion*,  
P. 464. S. 3.

*No Christian must be of a Party or Sect as such, that is, as dividing itself from the rest, causing Schism or Contention in the Body, or making a Rent unneceſſarily in any particular Church which is a part.*

---

*L O N D O N :*

Printed by H. Parker, for HENRY CLEMENTS,  
at the *Half-Moon*, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.  
MDCCXVII.

## ANSWERING

NOTE

# SANJAYA

INTRODUCTION

## Comics of England

ANNUAL



The following is a brief history of the formation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Final Results for the G-3 484

The following is a list of the names of the members of the Board of Education, the Board of Health, and the Board of Ethics.



TO THE  
DISSENTERS  
FROM THE  
Church of ENGLAND.



S there is not any Thing  
( my Brethren ) that can  
more Effectually recom-  
mend Religion to the  
World, than Unity a-  
mong those that profess it ; ( that being  
the Characteristick whereby it shall be  
known that we are Christ's Disciples. )  
So there is nothing does more sensibly  
hinder

## P R E F A C E.

binder its Progress, than Contentions and Divisions : These have a tendency to scandalize and unsettle the Weak, who are apt to be carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, and to tempt the Proud and Licentious to a neglect of all Religion. He that can be unconcern'd at such unhappy Consequences, and will not use his best Endeavours towards the healing of those Wounds that are artfully kept open by the Cunning of designing Men, can hardly be reckon'd a Lively Member of Christ's Mystical Body ; because every Man consider'd in that Capacity, is oblig'd to do all he can to promote the Peace and Unity of the Church, and the Quiet of those that are Members of the same Body.

I have endeavour'd in the following Treatise, to Answer the Pleas that are commonly us'd to vindicate Lay-Separation from the Church of ENGLAND ; wherein I have avoided that unfair way  
of

## P R E F A C E.

of making my Antagonist almost a perfect Novice in the Controversy. The Arguments us'd by my Lay-Dissenter in this Dialogue, are generally taken from a late Pamphlet Entitl'd Lay-Nonconformity Justified ; and I hope the unprejudic'd Reader will find 'em fairly answer'd. My earnest request to you my Dissenting Brethren is, That you would lay aside all Prejudice, before you give Judgment upon the Answers to the Arguments, by which you are taught to Defend Lay-Nonconformity. If upon perusing the Title Page, you declare that you are too far engag'd in the Cause, to be mov'd by my Arguments against it, I would advise you not to lose so much time as a deliberate Reading of it requires : But if you are persuaded that you can Impartially weigh the Controversie, tho' I am thoroughly sensible of the Imperfections in the Performance ; yet I persuade my self, that I have said enough to Convince any Man who has a due regard

## P R E F A C E.

*regard to the Peace and Unity of the Church, of the unreasonableness of Separation.*

To Convince you, that you are bound to use your utmost Endeavours to avoid all differences of Opinion, that may occasion Contentions and Divisions, I refer you to the Pathetick Intreaty and Admonition which St. Paul gives to the Corinthians, when they were in danger of being rent into several Factions upon Misunderstandings and Emulations, not much unlike to ours now a days. I Beseech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no Divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly join'd together, in the same Mind and in the same Judgment.

*And if the same Apostle call those Divisions in the Church of Corinth,  
(wherein*

## P R E F A C E.

(wherein Christians did not separate into divers Congregations) Schisms, how much more may your Separation from us, and your setting up other Religious Societies in opposition to the Church of England, fall under that Character? Since you have not so just and plausible Reasons to vindicate your Separation, as they had, who liv'd in the Communion of that Church; who when they came to the Lord's Supper, were guilty of such Immoralities as the Members in our Communion can never be charg'd with.

I beseech you my Brethren for the Lord's sake, not to lay too much stress upon the Modes and Circumstances of Worship, nor to place your Religion in being unlike to those who live in our Communion; but always endeavour to follow Peace with all Men, and to do all you can with a safe Conscience to promote the Peace and Unity of the Church: That you may have a good Title

## P R E F A C E.

tle to the Blessedness promised to the Peace-makers, and that the God of Peace may encline you to pursue those Things that may promote both the Peace of his Church, and your own Eternal Peace and Rest, shall be the constant Prayer of your Well Wisher,

5.0059



T H E



T H E  
*L A Y - M A N ' s - P L E A S*  
 F O R  
 S E P A R A T I O N , &c.

*Church.*



Good Morning to you Sir.  
 I am heartily glad to see  
 you. How do's all your  
 good Family do ?

*Diff.* I thank you Sir, I  
 bles God, they are all (thro'  
 Mercy) very well : I hope  
 yours are all in good Health  
 too.

*Church.* They are all very well, I thank God. I hope  
 you'll pardon my Freedom, Pray Sir whither are you  
 walking this pleasant Morning ?

*Diff.* I came abroad on purpose to take the Air, and  
 if you had not prevented me, by meeting me here, I de-  
 sign'd to call on you at your House ; on purpose to spend  
 an Hour or two with you.

*Church.* I hope Sir your meeting me here, will not  
 divert your good Intention : I am not engag'd in any  
 Busineſs, ſo I'll walk back with you, and I hope you'll  
 grant me the Favour of your Company.

B

*Diff.*

112

## 2 The L A Y - M A N ' S - P L E A S , &c.

*Diss.* I like your proposal, for to be free with you, I have for some time long'd for an Opportunity to talk with you an Hour or two, about some matters of Moment.

*Church.* I shall be very willing to give you the best Satisfaction I can, in any thing that lies in my Power, as soon as we have a convenient Opportunity; so we will let it alone till we come to my House.

*Diss.* I hope Sir, the Subject that I am so very desirous to talk with you upon, will not be displeasing to you. It is that of *Conformity* and *Separation*.

*Church.* So far from displeasing me, that I assure you I love to talk about it; and I desire that you'll use as much Freedom as if you was at Home, for you are heartily welcome.

*Diss.* I will, so without any farther Ceremony I will tell you, what I have a mind to be satisfied about. I have formerly seen you at our *Meeting-House*, but for several Months past, I have observ'd that you have not been there. I desire you to tell me whether you are disgusted at any thing you have met with in our *Society*?

*Church.* I do assure you, that it was not any thing particular belonging to your *Society*, but what is common to all of 'em, that made me absent my self. I was Educated amongst the *Dissenters*, and being engaged in a *Separation* before I was capable of judging for my self, I thought it my Duty to enquire into the Reasons for *Separation*.

I am satisfied that you are a Man of more Sense, than to think that a Person is obliged to retain the Principles he is Educated in, without ever examining them. This is like the Beasts of burthen, patiently to carry every thing that is laid upon 'em, and is much below the Dignity of a rational Creature. I resolv'd therefore to read those Books that are wrote against *Separation*, with the utmost Impartiality, as well as those that vindicate it: For I think that *Man* who applies himself only to such Authors, as he already knows by the General Character of 'em, agree with his present Thoughts, favour his Inclinations, and confirm his Tenets; deals very fallaciously and treacherously with himself, in matters of Moment and Consequence. For Instance, for a Man to hear or see nothing but Objections against the *Liturgy*, without ever consulting those, who write in Vindication of it; to reject the *Order of Bishops*, without consulting good Commentators upon those Texts, where they are mentioned in the *New-Testament*; or reading those Treatises

Treatises that are wrote in Vindication of *Episcopacy*; is to fetter his Reason, and to take things upon hearsay. I therefore studied the *Controversy*, and this is the result of my Enquiry, viz. That I ought not any longer to live in a State of *Separation* from the *Church of England*.

If you are willing to know what those Arguments were, that convinc'd me of the Lawfulness of *Conformity* to the *Church*, I'll tell you by and by; but excuse me till I ask you a Question, to which I desire your plain Answer. If I have not forgot my self, I have heard you say that for many Years you attended the Service of the *Church of England*; did you or no?

" *Diff.* I did, (a) and was grown to a considerable Age, " before I had so much as once been present at any other " religious Assembly. I heard as many Sermons as I could, " join'd in the publick Prayers, and receiv'd the Lord's Sup- " per as often as there was Opportunity. But having by " God's Providence fallen into an Acquaintance with some " *Protestant Dissenters* in the Neighbourhood, I was by them " perswaded to go to a Meeting-House; and I was so well " satisfied, that I have frequented such Assemblies ever since. " I found that the Dissenters way of *Preaching* and *Praying* was most *Edifying*, their *Administration of Sacra- ments* most *Regular* and *Scriptural*, their *Discipline* most " *strict*, their *Conversation* (generally speaking) more " *circumspect* and *Holy* than theirs, with whom I con- " vers'd formerly; and, in short, I find it more for my " Soul's Advantage to join with them, than with the " *Establishment*. God is my Witness that I have no pre- " judice against the *Church of England*, or any of its Mem- bers, nor had any *private Views* in what I then did.

*Church*. You have very Ingenuously acknowledg'd your self to be guilty of a most notorious *Schism*, even in the Judgment of the Learned Mr. *Hales*, whose Treatise your Teachers admire and commend, and frequently quote to clear themselves of that heavy charge. (b) *Schism* (says he) is an unnecessary Separation of Christians, from that part of the visible *Church*, of which they were once *Members*; And is only Necessary, when nothing will save us from the guilt of *Conscience*, but open *Separation*. Every Man is engag'd as a *Christian* to do all that's in his Power to promote *Unity* in religious Matters; and

---

(a) P. 15. Of *Lay Non-Conformity justified*. (b) *Treatise of Schism.*  
P. 195.

#### 4 The L A Y-M A N ' S - P L E A S , &c.

without doing this, no Man can be reckon'd *religious*; there being a *Society* in Religion, and the very nature of a *Society* engages every Man that is a Member of it, to promote Unity. So that in short, let a Man's private Perswasion be what it will, as he is a *Member* of that *Body* which professes the same, he is obliged to promote Union amongst all the *Members* of it, if he can do it without sinning against Conscience.

And this appears to be a Duty, not only from the Nature of a *Church*, in common with all other Societies; but in a particular manner from the Precepts of its *Holy Author*, which enforce that *Unity* upon all its *Members*; and without being heartily desirous of this, no Man deserves to be called a *Christian*.

Amongst the many Instances that may be given to improve the Truth of this, I entreat you to remember, that our *Blessed Saviour* not long before his departure from 'em, recommended *Peace* and *Unity* to his *Disciples*, as the dearest pledge of his Love, that he could leave 'em; and earnestly beseeches his *Father*, that their *Union* may resemble that close and inseparable *Union* between the *Father* and the *Son*, (a) as a *Testimony* of the truth of his *Mission*; and of the Truth of that Holy Religion that he came to establish.

This *Unity* ought to be preserv'd in the *Church*, and no Man can live in *Communion* with the *Catholick Church*, but by joining himself with some particular part of it. You belong'd (you say) for some Years to the *Church of England*, but by the perswasion of some honest *Dissenters*, you went to their Meetings; and so shook hands with her *Communion*, only because you imagined it was more for your Edification. Give me leave to tell you, that the *Dissenters* who perswaded you to go to the *Meeting-house* with them, did not act so honestly or honourably as they ought to have done. A *Dissenter* may lawfully wish that those things in the *Church* which offend him, were removed out of the way, in order to effect that *Unity* which ev'ry good Man is desirous of: But to fill others with *Prejudice* against the *Church*, who may easily *Conform*, having no *Scruples* and *Objections* against her, is hardly agreeable to that *Charity* which *Dissenters* profess; and looks too like an *Abuse* of that *Indulgence* which the *Government* allows'em.

---

(a) John 17. 21.

## The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c. 3

Neither did you behave your self like an *Honest-man*, in leaving the *Communion* of the *Church of England* upon such slight Reasons; nay by your own Confession, for no Reason at all. Is the *Peace* and *Unity* of the *Church* a Matter of so little Importance? By the Confession of all the Learned Men amongst the Dissenters, it ought to be industriously maintain'd, when it can be done without Sin.

If you had been really uneasy at any thing in our *Church*, so that you had scrupled the *Lawfulness* of communicating with her; before that you deserted her, you ought to have applied your self to the Minister of your *Parish*, to have acquainted him with your *Doubts* and *Scraples*, in order to the quieting of your *Conscience*; which if he could not have done, then you had been furnished with a better Plea for *Separation*. But as the case now stands, you are only guided by *humour* and *fancy*, "the gratifying an *Itching Ear*, having Mens Persons in Admiration, and such like trifles, which as a Learned *Bishop* says (a) are very bad Pleas, for disturbing the *Peace* of the *Church*, rending the *Body* of *Christ*, and making way by such *Divisions* for the Common Enemy of the *Reform'd Religion*, to subvert and destroy that *Church*, which is the great, the chief-est Bulwark of it.

Till you left the *Church*, the Minister of your *Parish* was undoubtedly your Director and Guide in all your Spiritual Concerns; he was the Person whom the Laws of God and Man had set and appointed to attend on this very thing. Your forsaking the *Church* was an Affair of such a Nature as you ought to have had his Direction in, and if you had acquainted him with the Reasons that inclined you to leave the *Church*, your *Schism* might have been stopt when it was only in the bud. So that I cannot imagine how you can Justifie your Proceedings in this Case.

*Diff.* "I perceive you and I are like to differ very much in our Sentiments, but I hope it shall be amicably. It is my Opinion that every private Christian may chuse to what Minister he will commit the Care of his Soul. Now according to the Method and Constitution of the *Church of England*, Ministers cannot

---

(a) *Bishop of Sarum's Charge to his Clergy.* p. 22.

## 6 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

" be said to be of the Peoples choosing. If a *Patron* presents a Person, and gets his Institution and Induction, let him be who or what he will, Sober or Scandalous, Qualified or Unqualified, the Parish must receive him ; and I don't see how they are able to help themselves. (\*)

Cb. If your *Latitudinarian* Principle holds true, I don't know but that in a little time every Master of a Family may set up to be a Priest in his own House, and that *Infamous Book the Rights, &c.*, may come to be reckoned the truest and best Account of *Church Government*. How is it possible to preserve *Unity* and *Peace* according to such a Notion as yours ? Suppose the Parish have the Liberty of Electing their own Minister, its more than probable that they will not be entirely Unanimous in their Choice. The Party who had not Interest enough to bring in the Person that they had the most mind to, must immediately make a Division, and seek out for another Minister. If there happen to arise a second Difference, they must subdivide, and so on till they break the Society into pieces.

I need not tell you, what Feuds and Animosities have risen amongst Dissenters in their Elections. Nor what tricking and undermining there is in the management of such Affairs, as one of your own Teachers complains (a). 'Tis not a great many Years since Guards were placed at the Meeting-house (that goes under the Denomination of *Presbyterian*) at *Leeds*; Mr. T. Baxter and Mr. Peters had each their Parties, and were in a State of War, till Mr. Boyse composed the Difference. And 'tis not quite so long since a very pert *Man* in Town, gave most of the Noted Teachers in a County the trouble of taking a Journey to *Tork*, to compose a Difference that happened at *Newcastle* upon the Election of a Teacher. So that you have no great Reason to value your selves on the Account of your popular Elections. But to Examine your Argument a Little closer.

You will acknowledge ( I take it for granted ) that the *Church of England* is a true and sound part of the *Catholick-Church*, to which you are bound to joyn your self. Now this being made up of several Parishes, which

---

(\*) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 7.

(a) *Standen's Sermon preach'd at Taunton.*

## The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

7

all make but one Communion and Church, " You are  
" not at liberty to chuse to which Body you'll joyn your  
" self ( says a late (b) Learned Writer ) as you are to  
" chuse in what Parish you'll settle your self : But you  
are bound to joyn your self to that Society where you  
live, unless you can prove that the Terms of Commu-  
nion are unlawful. It is not your complaining of your  
Parish Minister that can justifie your breaking the *Unity*  
of the Church ; " for the Church (says a noted Teacher  
" (c) of yours) is bound to take many a Man as a true  
Minister to them, and receive the Ordinances from  
him, in Faith and Expectation of a Blessing upon  
promise, who yet before God is a sinful Invader and  
Usurper of the Ministry ; and shall be condemned  
for it. ( How much more then to respect their Law-  
ful Bishops and Pastors? )

Tho' you formerly lived in the Communion of the *Church of England*, and now declare that you have no Prejudice against Her ; yet I must needs tell you, that your Insinuations in the latter part of the Objection, have not that Christian Charity you so much extoll. viz. *If a Clergy-man gets Institution and Induction, let him be what he will, Sober or Scandalous, Qualified or Unqualified, &c.* The Clergy of the *Church of England* have the Advantage of a Liberal Education in one of the Famous Universities. When they go into Holy Orders, they are obliged to carry a Testimonial from the College or Hall that they belong'd to ; and if they have lived in the Country for any considerable time before their Admission into *Orders*, a Certificate is required from three Neighbouring *Clergy-men*, concerning their Life and Conversation. They are Examined by the *Bishop* or his Chaplains after a stricter manner than your Teachers give out.

Before they have Institution to any Benefice, they show their *Letters of Orders*, exhibit Testimonials of their regular Life and Conversation, and very often undergo another Examination. Now since this care is taken in the Church (unless you imagine that there is no such thing as common Honesty amongst Churchmen) you ought to have spared that Reflection.

---

(b) *Ld. Bishop of Sarum in his fourth Discourse to his Clergy.* p. 85.

(c) *Baxter of Church Government.* p. 154.

*Diff.*

## 8 The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c.

*Diff.* "Why may not I have the Liberty to put my Soul under the Conduct of what Spiritual Guide I please? No one pretends to order what *Physician* I shall call to my Assistance, when my Life is in danger; nor what *Lawyer* I shall make use of, if my Estate is in hazard; and why I should not have the same Liberty in chusing my Minister as well as I have in the other two; I could never see a Reason. (a)

*Ch.* I'll give you a Reason why you are not at Liberty to chuse your own Minister, as well as your own *Lawyer* or *Physician*; neither the Laws of God nor Man have given you such a Liberty.

But suppose by an Act of Parliament, a *Physician* was placed in every *Parish*, and the Person placed in yours had a sufficient Skill to cure any Distemper that you was afflicted with. And to carry the point yet farther, we will suppose that you are bound by a Law to follow the Prescriptions of your own *Physician*, but exempted from any Penalty in case you apply your self to another; would not any Man think that you are guided by Humour and Fancy, if you neglect to send for your own *Physician*, under whose management you may be safe, and make use of another, meerly because the *Physick* he prescribes is more agreeable to your Palate, which at present is vitiated by the height of the Distemper.

To apply this to the Case before us; we live in a Nation whose Ecclesiastical Government is admired and spoken well of by all the *Foreign Reform'd Churches*. We have all things necessary to Salvation deliver'd to us, and if we are not wilfully wanting in doing our Duty, we may Worship God in the Beauty of Holiness. If the Minister under whose Care the Divine Providence has placed us, is not so well qualified as some others, Yet we are certain that we shall be instruced in all things necessary to Salvation, if we are constant and devout in performing the Service of the Church: And we may justly expect that if we shew a Conscientious Regard to the *Unity* of the *Church*, God will bless the Ministrations of that Person that his Providence has set over us, tho' his Performances are not (it may be) so Excellent as those of some others, yet they shall prove more Beneficial than (if we broke the *Unity* of the

---

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 7.

839

## The L A Y - M A N ' s - P L E A S , &c. 9

Church to hear a better-gifted Man) the Performances of such a Person will be.

" *Diff.* You may say what you please to vindicate the Constitution of the Church, it seems to me very plain from the *New-Testament*, that the Body of the Church are to be concerned in the Election of their Officers. This is certain, after the dreadful Apostacy, and Tragical end of *Judas*, (a) all the Disciples to the Number of about an hundred and twenty Persons met together, to fill up the vacancy, *Acts 1. 25. &c.* And at the choice of the *Seven Deacons* which we read of *Acts 6*, the Faithful being called to Assemble themselves, agreed upon the Persons they thought most proper, and presented them to the *Apostles*, who after having prayed to God, laid their hands on them.

*Church.* Your Opinion is founded on a very tottering Basis, tho' you quote Scripture to maintain it. I don't know from what part of the Chapter you conclude, that the design of their Meeting was to fill up the Vacancy. It seems much more probable from the Context, that there was a good Number of 'em (about Sixscore) gathered together to the publick Service of God. St. Peter addressed himself to the Eleven, and not to the whole Number, as you do imagine, which is plain from the 17 ver. for he was numbered with us (that is) he was of our Society, a Fellow-Apostle. And they (viz. the Eleven) appointed two, leaving it to the Lots to decide which of 'em it should be, and the Lot fell on *Matthias*, so that he was not chosen by the Suffrages or Votes of Men, it was meerly the decision of the Lot, and so the disposition of the Lord. And this is agreeable to the (b) Original συγκαταλογία μετὰ τῶν ἐν δεκά δ' ποσόλαν.

Your other Instance in the 6th of *Acts*, concerning the Choice of the Seven Deacons, falls much short of proving the point in debate. The *Apostles* gave orders to the Church to look out seven Men, to be ordained to the Office of *Deacons*, nominated their Qualifications, and reserved the κατασήμανται, the Ordination or Constitu-

---

(a) Nonconformity justified, p. 7.

(b) The Word συγκαταλογία is acknowledg'd to come from σύγκατος Calculus a Stone, or the like, of which there were two uses, one in choices in Judgments, wherein they gave their Votes by this means; The other in accounting or numbring: The latter is most probably the Sense in this place. Vid. Dr. Hammond in loc.

tion of 'em to themselves. So that this amounts to little more (if any thing at all) than the having a Testimonial from the *Church* of their Lives and Conversations.

And now that you have put me in mind of the Order of *Deacons*, I have often wondred that none of your Teachers have ever said a word in vindication of themselves, for casting that order out of the *Church*. You only allow of one Order and Function among you, whereas 'tis plain from St. Paul's Epistles, that *Deacons* were Officers dedicated to the Service of God, out of which, as any serv'd well in it, they were advanced to a superior Degree, and they were ever esteemed a sacred Order of Men. Whereas those few that in some places are call'd so amongst the *Dissenters*, are no more than our Overseers of the poor in Parishes. No wonder that Men reject a superior Order, which (a) (*the late Lord Bishop of Sarum says*) was settled by the *Apostles* themselves, and is related to by many places in the New Testament; who have thrust out the inferior of *Deacons*, which there seems to be as much occasion for, as there was at the first Institution of it. This may serve to convince you, that after all your loud Cries to keep close to *Scripture Institution*, you can lay it aside, if it suits your Conveniency.

But to return to your complaint, viz. that in the *Church of England* you are deprived of the Liberty of choosing your Minister, which is your undoubted Right. Unless you can give better Reasons to prove that you have such a Right, than you have already done, I would not give any thing for it. To deal freely with you, I can give more Instances than one, of Persons that have been made Choice of, to be Ministers in your *Meeting-Houses*, without the Consent of the Majority of the People. I am apt to think, that when Mr. R—— bought a certain *Meeting-House*, which he afterwards sold for very considerable Advantage; neither he, nor the Person who succeeded him, had the *Suffrage* of the Majority of the Auditory.

You know as well as I, that your *Ministers* are commonly chosen by the leading Persons in a Congregation. They whose Fortunes will not allow 'em to contribute much to his Maintenance, are seldom consulted in such Elections; yet their Souls are as valuable as the Souls

---

(a) *Lord Bishop of Sarum's fourth Discourse to his Clergy*, p. 96.  
of

## The L A Y-M A N'S-P L E A S , &c. 11

of those that have larger Purses. If those who are not consulted in the Election of a *Teacher*, should separate from that Assembly, you would be apt to condemn 'em for it; and I am sure you might much more justly accuse 'em of *Schism*, than a great Man of your Party did a *Gentlewoman*, for leaving his, and communicating with a Congregation that goes under the same Denomination.

But for my part, if I was ever so fully convinced that it was my certain undoubted Right to choose to what Minister I would commit the Care of my Soul, I would not be a *Dissenter*, unless I could meet with better Arguments to prove that their Teachers have a valid Ordination. It is certainly much safer to live in a Communion of the *Church*, where I am assured the *Minister* has valid and regular Orders; than to stray from it, and join my self to a Society whose *Teacher* was never invested with any proper Authority to perform the Office he undertakes.

*Diff.* Sir, you know that the Ordination of Ministers amongst us, is perform'd with all imaginable Devotion and Solemnity. The Persons that are Ordained, are strictly examined; and in the Face of the Congregation, promise that they will be diligent in (*a*) *Praying, Reading, Preaching, Administ'ring the Sacraments, &c.* That they will be zealous and faithful in maintaining the *Truth of the Gospel, and Unity of the Church*, against *Error, and Schism, &c.* One of the senior Ministers in solemn Prayer, recommends the Persons to the Grace of God, several others joining with him in the *Imposition of hands*; and can you object any thing against this?

*Church.* You mistake my meaning; It was not the management of Ordination with respect to the manner of performing it, that I objected against. I deny that the Persons who perform that Office, have any Authority to perform it; I affirm that your Ordinations are Invalid. But since you have mentioned your way of Ordaining, I cannot forbear taking notice of something you have mentioned, which I never heard of before, *viz.* That the Persons Ordained, promise to maintain the *Unity of the Church, against Error and Schism.* I wish with all my Soul, they may use their best Endeavours to make good that Promise; but every Man must needs think it's very odd to engage a Man to promise to maintain the *Unity of the Church*, who gets a *Maintenance by Sepa-*

---

(*a*) Nonconformity justified p. 8, 9.

12 The L A Y-M A N ' S - P L E A S , &c.

ration ; and very unaccountable that Men should promise to prevent Schism, who make it their Business to fill mankind with prejudices against the *Church of England*, which they themselves do own is a true and sound part of the Catholick Church, and yet are very diligent to draw away Persons from her Communion.

You have some of you Imposition of hands, but the thing intended by it, viz. the giving the Person Authority, is wholly omitted. The senior Presbyter (at the Ordinations which I have been present at) does not (according to the practice of our Church) say, *Take thou Authority to preach the Word of God, &c.* or any thing to that purpose ; which in my Opinion is a gross Omission. Some form of Investiture is commonly made use of, when Persons are admitted into any Office, and the delivery of the *Holy Bible*, with the Words mentioned, seems very proper, when Persons are admitted into the Order of Priesthood ; but I will not loose any more time in making Remarks upon the manner of Ordaining Persons with you, since I have already told you, that I think the Ordinations Invalid.

*Diff.* You affirm that Ordination by *Presbyters* is invalid. That they have right to Ordain I am very well satisfied, and if you'll give me leave, I will tell you upon what grounds I think so.

*Church.* I shall be very willing to hear what Reasons you have for your Opinion, and I will promise to answer your Arguments. But first I desire you to mention only one at a time, and then give me leave to reply.

*Diff.* I like your proposal, and therefore I will comply with it. (a) " In the first place then, I have carefully consulted the *New Testament*, and can't find there any difference between a *Bishop* and *Presbyter*, but it seems very plain to me that the Persons called by these Names, were of the very same *Order* and *Office*. St. Paul writing to the *Philippians*, directs his Epistle to all the *Saints* in *Christ at Philippi*, with the *Bishops* and *Deacons*. Had there been any *Presbyters* distinct from *Bishops*, undoubtedly these would have been mentioned as well as the other ; and this with several other Texts, proves that the *Names* were then used in *Common*. And it is as plain in my Opinion, that the *Office* of the *Bishop* and *Presbyter* was the same likewise ; this I am convinced

---

(a) *Nonconformity justified*, p. 9, 10.

" of from the Exhortations of St. Peter to the Presbyters  
 " of the scattered Jews, *Feed the Flock of God which is  
 among you*, (says he) taking the oversight thereof, or as  
 " the Greek word signifies, acting the part of Bishops. If  
 " Presbyters then are Scriptural Bishops (as from the Texts  
 before cited it appears they are) then the Dissenting  
 Ministers have Episcopal Ordination, and are as regular  
 Ministers of Christ as any are.

*Ch.* I have Examined the New Testament with as much Care as you have in the Case now under our Consideration, and I Conclude after my strictest Enquiry, that we have no perfect Form of Church Government mentioned there; nor have we any great Reason to expect such an Account.

The Epistles (which make mention of Church Officers most frequently) were generally written to such as were lately converted from Judaism, or Heathenism, to Christianity; and the chief Design of the Authors was to Instruct 'em in the Fundamental Principles of Religion, and to Arm them against such Errors as were then broach'd by false Teachers. Neither was there any occasion to give a particular Account of the Government of the Church in those Epistles, since it was generally in their own Hands, or else was by them committed to proper Persons chosen by themselves. Their chief Design was to Instruct 'em in useful Principles; and in the general to put them in mind of the Duties they owed to such as *Laboured amongst them in the Ministry*.

But it is plain from Scripture beyond all Controversy, that besides the Apostles there were in the Church at least Two Orders of fixed and stated Ministers inferior to the Apostles, and subject to their Jurisdiction. That the Apostles had others to succeed them is too plain to be denied, unless you will affirm that the extensive Promise made by our Saviour to them, to be *with them to the end of the World*, is of none Effect. This necessarily implies that they must be Succeeded by others in their Office, for the Oldest of 'em did not survive this promise above fourscore Years. That common distinction used by your Teachers between their Ordinary and Extraordinary Capacity, is very little to the purpose: For no Body affirms that their Successors now are Endued with a power of working Miracles, &c. and therefore we don't affirm that they had Successors in their Extraordinary Capacity.

And

Boys.

And it is plain beyond all dispute, that they appointed Persons to preside over, and Govern the Churches that they had already planted, even in their own times: The Epistles directed to *Timothy* and *Titus*, is a sufficient proof that they were entrusted with such Power. St. Paul advises *Timothy* (a) not to receive an *Accusation against an Elder, but before two or three Witnesses*. The same Apostle gives Instructions to *Titus* to *ordain Elders in every City—and to set in order the things that are wanting*. A Learned (b) Writer (now a Bishop) in his Excellent Treatise of *Church Government*, proves that *Timothy* was *Bishop of Ephesus*; and that there was an uninterrupted Succession of Twenty Seven *Bishops* in that *Church*, from him to the time of the great Council of *Chalcedon*. “So that what an Ingenious Writer of yours (c) says, is only a Novel Opinion, That *Timothy* and *Titus* were not *Bishops*, but only *Evangelists*; whose Office was not confined to any particular Church, any more than that of the *Apostles*. They were appointed by the *Apostles* to plant Churches, to visit the Churches that were already planted, to give Directions and Orders to those *Elders* and *Bishops*, which they had set over them. The same Author ingenuously owns that *Timothy* and *Titus* were styled *Bishops* by some Historians in the succeeding Ages. So that in short he gives 'em both an *Archiepiscopal* Power, tho' he denies 'em the Title, and sounds his Opinion of their being *Evangelists*, with such a Power as he mentions, upon a Fancy of his own, without so much as mentioning the Order of *Evangelists*, or telling us what Powers are in *Scripture annex'd to that Office*. Any one might reasonably have expected to have seen it proved from the New Testament, that the Power of Modelling Churches, of Prescribing Rules, of Conferring Holy Orders, of Examining, Judging, and Reprehending Offenders, (and even *Elders* themselves) belong'd to these *Evangelists* he mentions: But there is not one word of any such Power annexed to that *Office*; so that we may after all conclude, that they had an *Archiepiscopal* Power, for the *Elders* were subjected to their Authority.

And now I will consider more particularly the promiscuous use of the Names, on which the force of your Argument depends. And you must pardon me if for

(a) 1 Ep. to T.m. 5. 19. (b) Bishop of Oxford. (c) The Office of a Scriptural Bishop by J. B. Printed at Dublin. p. 417.

once I am so Sceptical, as to require proof that the Texts wherein *Bishop* and *Presbyter* as used so promiscuously (as you imagine) are part of the *Canonical Scripture*. If you can prove what Writings are Genuine, and what are not, any other way than by the Testimony of the *Fathers*, I am much mistaken. Now it is certainly a Matter of Fact full as notorious, whether *Bishops* were Superior to *Presbyters*, as what Writings were *Apostolical*. And if you are obliged to depend on their Authority, to prove that those Texts which use the Names of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* promiscuously, are the Genuine Writings of the *Apostles*; there is as good Reason why you should depend on their Authority, in explaining those Texts, because they in reason must be acknowledged to best acquainted, both with the Design and Practice of the Apostles.  
Unless then you can prove that some of the most Antient *Fathers*, Enumerating the Orders of the *Church*, use the Words *Bishop* and *Presbyter* promiscuously, or say they took 'em to be so used in *Scripture* (and their Practice is the best Comment upon their Opinions) you must Excuse me if I tell you, there is nothing at all in your Argument, drawn from the promiscuous use of the Words *Bishop* and *Presbyter*.

Give me leave to mention a passage or two out of the *Fathers*, very full to my present purpose. St. *Ignatius*, Disciple to St. *John*, who suffered Martyrdom about the 10th Year of *Trajan*; (which was but a few Years after St. *John* return'd from his Banishment) in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, mentions *Onesimus* their *Bishop*, whom he Exhorts all of 'em, *Presbyters* and *Deacons* as well as private Christians, to Obey. This *Ignatius* (as the Learned Mr. *Reeves* (a) observes) mentions the Distinct Orders of *Bishop*, *Presbyter*, and *Deacon*, no less than Sixteen times in Seven short Epistles. There is one Noble passage mentioned by that Excellent Author, part of which I will take leave to Transcribe. Be all Obedient to the *Bishop*, as *Jesus Christ* was to the *Father*, and to the *Presbytery*, as to the *Apostles*. The *Deacons* also Reverence as the Ordinance of God. The same *Father* salutes the Church of the *Trallians* in the Fulness of the *Apostolical Character*, and in his Epistle to them says,

(a) Preface to the *Apologies concerning the right use of the Fathers.* p. 17.

(b) Be

16 The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c.

(b) Be Subject to your *Bishops* as unto the Lord—And to the *Presbyters* as to the *Apostles* of Christ.—Likewise the *Deacons* also being *Ministers* of the *Mysteries* of Christ, ought to please in all things—without these there is no *Church* of the Elect. He is without, who does any thing without the *Bishop* and *Presbyters* and *Deacons*, and such a one is defiled in his Conscience. He also directs his *Epistle* to the *Church* at *Philadelphia*, to those who were in Unity with their *Bishop*, and *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*.

(c) *Irenaeus*, *Polycarp's* Disciple, urges a Succession of *Bishops* from the *Apostles* to his time: And moreover adds, that the *Apostles* themselves committed the Care of the *Churches* into their Hands; leaving them to succeed, not only in the Place, but the Jurisdiction of the *Apostles*.

If you consider at what time *St. Ignatius* lived, you cannot imagine that he was unacquainted with the Government of the *Church*, as settled by the *Apostles*. And *Irenaeus* who lived about the Year 180, might be able easily to know who were the *Bishops* in the *Church* down to his time, and both make express mention of three Orders in the *Church*.

And also those *Minor Fathers*, who are thought to be favourers of the *Presbyterian Scheme*, *Chrysostome* and *Jerome*, grant the Power of Ordination to be lodg'd entirely in the *Bishop*. The former speaking as Low and Moderate of *Episcopacy* as he well could, says (d) That *Ordination* is the Sole point wherein *Bishops* are Superior, and in this alone they seem to be above *Presbyters*. *Jerome* mentions *Ordination* as a Work proper to the *Bishop*.

Now since the *Fathers* who lived immediately after the *Apostles*, make mention of three distinct Orders, *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*; and even those in later times, who seem to favour *Presbytery*, affirm that the Power of *Ordaining* belongs to the *Bishop*; your Argu-

(b) τῷ Επισκόπῳ ψωτασσεδε ὡς τῷ κυείῳ. — καὶ τῷ πρεσβύτερῳ ὡς Αποσόλοις Ἰνοῦ Χριστῷ, &c.

(c) Habeamus annumerare eos, qui ab Apostolis instituti sunt Episcopi in Ecclesiis, & Successores eorum usq; ad nos, quibus etiam ipsas Ecclesias committebant, quos & Successores relinquebant, suum iporum locum Magisterij tradentes. Lib. 3. c. 3.

(d) τῷ γῷ χειροτονίᾳ μόνῃ ψωτεῖναι, καὶ τῷ μόνῳ δοκεῖσαι πλεονεχεῖν τὰς πρεσβύτερas. Homil. ii. in i Ep. ad Tim.

ments drawn from the Promiscuous use of the Names, to prove the validity of *Presbyterian Ordinations*, seems to have very little Strength left in it.

I am very unwilling to let this Argument pass without a full Answer, and therefore I will beg you to have patience a little longer. I cannot imagine how the promiscuous use of Names, proves the Office of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* to be the same. The *Apostles* are called sometimes *Deacons* or *Ministers*, and so are their Companions in Labour: For the term *Deacon*, signifying any one that Ministered (as a late learned Author (a) affirms) it was not then appropriated to the lowest Order, any more than *Presbyter* was to the Second; for the *Apostles* call themselves sometimes *Deacons*; so that from hence an Argument might be drawn, as well to prove that *Deacons* are equal in rank to the highest Order of *Bishops*, or that our Saviour was not superior to *Deacons*, because he is called Διάκονος, which we rightly translate *Minister*, Rom. 14. 8. A *Bishop*, as one observes, signifies an *Overseer*, and *Presbyter* an antient Man or *Elderman*; whence our term of *Alderman*; and this is as good a Foundation to prove, that the *Apostles* were *Aldermen*, according to the common acceptation of the Word, or that our *Aldermen* are all *Bishops* and *Apostles*, as to prove your *Presbyters* and *Bishops* are all one from the Childish jingle of the Words: and so I dismiss your first Argument, and desire you to proceed.

*Diff.* If *Episcopacy* has been universally received; yet I am well assured that such a *Diocesan Episcopacy* as we have now in the *Church of England*, was unknown to the *Primitive Christians*. (b) Their *Bishops* were no others than the *Pastors* of particular Congregations, such as our *Incumbents* who have Curates and Lecturers to assist 'em. All the People of a *Diocese* did every *Lord's-day*, meet in one place to celebrate Divine Service; they had but one Communion Table, (c) were all present at Church Censures, and no Offenders were restored again without the consent of the whole *Church*.

*Ch.* This Argument is borrowed from Mr. *David Clarkson's* Treatise of Primitive Episcopacy, and is excellently confuted by Dr. *Maurice*, in a Book call'd *Diocesan Episcopacy defended*, to which I have never seen a Reply.

(a) *Bishop of Sarum's fourth Discourse*, p. 96.  
*Non-Conformity justified*, p. 10.

(b) *Lay*

(c) *Ibid.* p. 11.

18 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

But the Division of the World into *Dioeceses*, does not at all affect the Case in debate. If there were three several Orders in the Church, viz. *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*, which I think I have fairly proved in Answer to the first Objection; then it matters not much, how large, or how small the *Dioeceses* were. It seems to be very plain that the first *Bishop* of *Ephesus* had *Presbyters* under his Jurisdiction, from St. Paul's Epistle to *Timothy*, which proves that he was not the Pastor of a single Congregation.

When the Gospel was first preach'd, it's more than probable that there was only one *Bishop* in a Church, or rather, in one City or Region; and the whole Congregation might meet together in that one Church where the *Bishop* was present: But it is plain that when the number of Converts encreased, there were *Presbyters* sent to those new Converts, other *Societies* were erected, and these *Presbyters* were in Subjection to the *Bishop*, as may be proved from several Passages in St. Ignatius's *Epistles*; I will only mention one in his *Epistle to the Magnesians*. (a) Therefore as *Christ* doth nothing without the *Father*, so neither do ye, whether *Presbyter*, *Deacon*, or *Laick*, any thing without the *Bishop*. This both proves that there were three Orders in the Church, and also that the *Presbyters* and *Deacons* were subordinate to *Bishops*: and so I dismiss your second Objection.

*Diff.* I profess you are a Champion for *Episcopacy*; when (b) I see good Mr.— I'll ask him for an Answer to what you have said, and then I will Reply. So I will go on with my Arguments to prove the validity of *Presbyterial Ordination*.

" *Timothy* was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the *Presbytery*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. Had it been said, by the hands of the *Episcopate*, you would have triumph'd (c) as having Demonstration on your side, and (as it is expressed now) you must give me leave to reckon it so on ours, unless you can produce better Reasons to the contrary, than I have yet met with.

*Ch.* You seem to lay a great stress upon this Argument, without any manner of Reason. I desire you to

---

(a) Ωστε τὸν ὁ κύριον ἀνδρὸν τῷ πατέρις ἐξὲν ποιεῖ γένων χαράμεσσις  
ἀνδρὸς τῆς Επισκόπου μηδὲ Πρεσβύτερος μηδὲ Διάκονος μηδὲ λαϊκός.  
Ep. ad Mag. (b) Lay-Nonconformity Justified. p. 13. (c) Ibid. p. 11.

## The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c. 19

remember that I have already told you, that the *Apostles* both call themselves *Presbyters*, and are call'd so by *Ignatius* St. John's Disciple, in his *Epistle* to the *Philadelphians*, πρεσβυτερον Εκκλησιας. It is more than probable that he was ordained to the Office of a *Bishop*, (a) by the laying on of the hands of St. *Paul*, and if any meer *Presbyters* laid on their hands at that time, it does no more prove that he was ordained by the *Presbytery* (in your Sense of the word) than that the Clergy of the *Church of England* are ordained by meer *Presbyters*, because they join with the *Bishop* in *Imposition of hands*. If you would prove any thing to the purpose from this Passage, it ought to be this, *viz.* That *Timothy* was ordained only by the Laying on of the hands of meer *Presbyters*, without an *Apostle*; and then you had made a very useful discovery. You had proved that he was ordained by *Presbyters*, to have a Jurisdiction over *Presbyters*; for you plainly see in I Epist. to Tim. §. 19. That he is instructed by the *Apostle*, not to receive any Accusation κατὰ πρεσβύτερον against an *Elder*, but before two or three Witnesses: Or else you must have lain under a Necessity of denying that he had a Power over that *Presbyter*, against whom he could receive Accusations; and on whom he could pass Censures. I hope this is a sufficient Answer to your third Argument, which you bring to prove the validity of your Teachers Orders. I desire you to proceed, if you have any more remaining.

*Diff.* My next Argument is in the Words of the learned Dr. *Calamy*. "The Ends of Ordination, *viz.* The setting Men apart to the Office of the Ministry, the Recommending a Man solemnly to the Grace of God, (b) for Assistance in the discharge of his Duty, the preventing an Intrusion into the Sacred Office, by unqualified Persons, the conciliating a Man that Measure of respect in the Church as is necessary, in order to his being useful in his ministerial Capacity; are as effectually answered where senior *Presbyters* Ordain, as where Diocesan *Bishops* are the Persons that officiate.

*Ch.* I think Sir, tho' you have quoted a Passage from an Author of Note, there is no force at all in the Argument. The Ends of Ordination mentioned by your Author, may be as effectually answered, without any Ordination at all, provided that a number of Persons agree

(a) 2 Ep. 1. 6.

(b) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 11.

20 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

together, to make choice of a Man to be their Pastor. They (by your own Argument) have a right to join themselves to what Person they please, and they need only to say, they find it most for their *Edification* to attend to the preaching of such a Person. It is very likely they will pay as much respect to the Teacher they have so made choice of, as Dr. Calamy's Congregation does to him; and if you'll allow them to be Judges (as upon your own Principles you must) they will tell you they are as much edified by his preaching, as you are by hearing of Mr. Rosewell, Mr. Wright, &c. For there will never want Men who will be as well pleased with Non-sense, as ingenious Discourses. You must allow that the Members of such a Society, can recommend the Teacher they have made choice of to the Divine Assistance, and heartily beg of God to enable him to discharge his Duty; they may resolve that no other Person shall preach to their Society: And this Management may procure to their Teacher in that Assembly as much respect, as any other dissenting Teacher has from his particular Congregation.

In short, this Argument depends so entirely on the Truth of this Assertion, viz. That *Presbyters* have the Power of *Ordaining* (which I cannot allow for the Reasons I have already mentioned) that unless the Position holds true, it proves nothing at all to the purpose. If that can be clearly prov'd, then the ends of Ordination may be effectually answered by such Ordination as you plead for.

*Diff.* I am fully satisfied that God has *remarkably bless'd* the *Dissenters Ministry* to the Conversion, Edification, and ~~and~~ Salvation of a Multitude of Souls; (a) and to suppose that God does ordinarily own Persons whom he never sent, is to insinuate as if he himself contributed to the Subverting Order and Regularity in the Church, which is a thought that I dare not give countenance to.

*Ch.* If this Argument proves any thing at all, 'tis more than you are willing it should, and enough to destroy what you here make use of it for to establish. I am well assured that the *Quakers* (who have no Orders at all) will tell you, that God has remarkably bless'd their Teaching, both at Home and Abroad, to be the means of Converting a multitude of Souls; and I know not

---

(a) *Lay Non-Conformity Justified.* p. 11.

why

why I should believe you, and give no Credit to them, when they affirm it, very likely upon equal grounds with you. I desire you to consider how many Congregations are supplied by *Candidates* very often for a considerable time; now if the Preaching and Praying of such Persons be Edifying, before they are Ordained to any Office in the Church, according to your way of Reasoning, this is an Argument to prove that they are true *Ministers* of *Christ*; and if their Preaching and Praying is not Edifying or Successful, I desire that you'll never pretend that all things are managed with such good Discipline in separate Assemblies, so long as you suffer (both in City and Country) so many *Candidates* to preach and pray in your Congregations.

I have a Collection of Sermons by me, that were preach'd before the H. of ~~Commons~~ at their Monthly Fastings, in the time of that unnatural War rais'd against King *Charles the First*, where the Argument of Success is urg'd with great Advantage: But I must declare that I could never be brought to have a good Opinion of the Proceedings at that time, by that sort of Reasoning. And this is all I shall offer in Answer to your Argument, drawn from the Success of your Teachers Ministriations, to prove that their Ordinations are valid; which does as fully prove the Truth of their *Mission* who (by their own Confession) have no Orders at all.

*Diff.* If *Presbyterian* Ordination be invalid, (a) how can any Clergy-man in *England* pretend to prove the Validity of his own Orders? To do this, he must be assured that the Person who ordained him, was Ordained by a *Bishop*, and the same of that *Bishop*, and thus must he run the matter back as far as the *Apostles* days; and if he can't make out an uninterrupted Succession, how can he prove that he was duly Ordained to his Office?

*Ch.* Your Argument is so very weak, that I am apt to think you don't believe it affects the Controversy. If an uninterrupted Succession, and a perfect knowledge of that Succession, are things so necessary, I dare affirm that none of your Teachers (allowing their Ordinations valid) can prove that they have a true *Mission*. For he that attempts to prove this, must prove that the Person who ordained him, was Ordained by *Presbyters*, and so

---

(a) *Lay Non-Conformity Justified.* p. 12.

22 The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c.

the same of those *Presbyters* quite back to the *Apostles* days; for if it is necessary for the one, it is equally necessary for the other.

Now in such a search a Clergy-man would have vastly the Advantage, because all Ecclesiastick writers always make mention of *Bishops* in all places where Christianity was received, as Governors of the Church: And it is much easier to trace a Succession of Kings in any Nation, than a Succession of *Mayors* in a Corporation. If one of your Teachers was to attempt to prove the Succession of *Presbyters*, and the Validity of his Orders that way, he would be quite lost as soon as he got to the late Civil Wars, and very likely instead of meeting with a Presbyter, would meet with a Captain of Horse, or some Military-man giving a Commission to use the *Sword of the Spirit*. In short there is nothing in this Argument that deserves any other Answer.

*Diff.* The Practice of your own *Bishops* and *Clergy*, in more Instances than one, is a virtual owning the Ordinations I am Vindicating. (a) Have not several Divines of the Church of *England*, received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper from Ministers that had no other than *Presbyterian* Ordination? And don't most of your Clergy admit *Dissenters* to the Lords Supper without so much as mentioning their being Re-baptized? which are both a virtual owning of our Orders.

*Ch.* I don't remember that any of our *Bishops* ever received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper from *Presbyterian* Ministers abroad. One who was afterwards a *Bishop*, urg'd this as a Reason to prove the Lawfulness of *Occasional Conformity*, that he himself was an Occasional Conformist at *Geneva*; and was sufficiently laught at in the House of Lords for making use of such a strenuous Argument. If I should undertake to prove that your Teachers (and by consequence their Hearers) are obliged to receive the Sacrament in the Church of *England*, and use this Argument to make good my Assertion, viz. That Mr. *Baxter*, Dr. *Bates*, &c. have received the Sacrament in the Church; You will be apt to reply, they might do as they thought fit, but I am not to have my Judgment guided by their Practice.

You wou'd do well to Consider, that those Divines of our Church, who have joyned in Communion with

---

(a) *Lay-Non-Conformity Justified.* p. 12.

*Presbyterian* Congregations Abroad, thought (it may be) that they ought not on any Account to neglect an Opportunity of receiving the Lord's Supper, tho' they could not receive it from Persons having *Episcopal* Ordination. And things done under an extream Necessity, never ought to be drawn into Precedent.

As to what you urge with respect to *Dissenters* being Admitted to the Lord's Supper by the Clergy of our Church, without any mention being made of their being Rebaptized ; I am very well Assured that they (generally speaking) who have Admitted such Persons to the Sacrament, do at the same time deny the Validity of *Presbyterian Ordinations* ; and look on the Baptism of such Persons to be no more than Lay-Baptism. And if there are any Inconsistencies in their Opinions and Practice, let them Answer for themselves, for I have no design to Vindicate such Persons, it being quite beside the Intent of this Conference. I desire you only to Observe, that those Authors who are against Rebaptizing Persons that have been Baptized by your Teachers, vindicate their Opinion by such Arguments and Quotations, as were design'd to prove the Validity of Lay-Baptism, and were used by those in former Ages who were Advocates for Lay-Baptisms.

*Diff.* " I dare not be so Ucharitable as to *Unchurch* all the *Foreign* Protestants ; which I apprehend is the Consequence of denying the Validity of *Presbyterian* Ordination ; for it's plain their Ministers never had any other. (a).

*Ch.* And dare you at the same time run counter to the whole *Christian* World, which is generally *Episcopal*, and must be in the Wrong if you are in the Right ? I desire you to produce an Instance, of any one *Christian Church* that was not Governed by *Bishops*, distinct from and superior to *Presbyters*, till within two Hundred Years last past ; till the *Vandois* in *Piedmont*, the *Hugonots* in *France*, the *Calvinists* in *Geneva*, and the *Presbyterians* thence translated into *Holland*, *Scotland*, and *England*. And what are these when compared with the Churches under the *Pope's* Supremacy and *Episcopal* ? As one ingeniously says, they are only like a Wart on the Face of the *Western Church* ; and if you compare 'em with the

---

(a) *Lay-Non-Conformity Justified.* p. 12.

## 24 The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c.

Catholick Church all over the World, which is all *Episcopal*, they will not appear so big as a Mole.

To Examine your Argument a little closer. I hope you don't pretend that your Case is Parallel to that of those *Foreign Protestants*, which you are so much concern'd for. Several of 'em have declared that they approve of, and Admire our Constitution, and wish they had the same kind of *Church Government*. They condemn your Separation, as you may see in their Letters printed in the latter end of Bishop *Stillingfleet's* Unreasonableness of Separation. There is certainly vast odds between the Case of those *Foreign Protestants*, and our Protestant Dissenters; the former approve of and admire our Constitution as *Episcopal*, these latter condemn it on that Account, and unreasonably make a Separation from it.

What Allowances God will make to those who think their Ordinations to be good, and that they are true *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, and as such do receive the Sacraments from them, (especially considering that they must either receive 'em from such Persons, or not at all,) I will not determine. But this does by no means give any Countenance to such as Separate from a true Church, whose Ministers by your own Confession are true Ministers of Christ, and where all Means necessary to Salvation may be had.

*Diff.* In the 23d Article of the Church, Ordination is not Confined to *Bishops* distinct from *Presbyters*; It only says, *Those we ought to judge Lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this Work, by Men who have Publick Authority given unto 'em in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's Vineyard.* (a)

*Ch.* In Answer to your first Argument, I have proved that there were three stated Orders in the Church, *Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons*. That *Bishops* had all along the Power of Ordaining, is plain from the Writings both of *Chrysostome* and *St. Jerome*, who are the Fathers that the Advocates of *Presbytery* most rely upon; and it is certainly the safest way, to judge in what Sense that Article is to be understood, by considering what was the Opinion and Practice of the *Primitive Church* down to the time in which those Articles were agreed upon: For tho' the Article is only in General Terms, yet it

---

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 12.

is certainly to be taken in a Sense agreeable to the Practice of Antiquity, which I have already mentioned.

*Diff.* I will only add a Word or two more, and then  
 " I will conclude on this Head of Discourse. I am very  
 " sorry to hear that the *Clergy* of the Church of *England*,  
 " allow the Validity of Orders given by *Popish Bishops*,  
 " who are maintainers of corrupt Doctrines, Enemies  
 " to the Faith, and haters of the very Name of *Protestant* ;  
 " (a) when *Protestant Divines* (*Men of Eminent Piety*,  
 " and capable of doing very great Service) can have no  
 " such Benefit, and for no other reason but because they  
 " never had a *Bishop's Hand* upon 'em.

*Ch.* And that alone (if you consider what I have already said) is a sufficient Reason why your *eminent Protestant Divines*, are not allowed to Officiate in the Church of *England*. Persons Ordained by *Popish Bishops* are received into our Church (upon a Solemn Renunciation of the Errors of the *Romish Church*) because they had Episcopal Ordination. For tho' *Idolatry* and the *Surpuration* of the *Pope* are Reasons Sufficient to Separate from the *Romish Church*, yet they do not so far *Unchurch* a *Church of Christ*, but that the Person upon true Repentance may be Received as a true Minister, without being re-Ordain'd. In the *Jewish Church*, (which was only a different State of the *Christian Church* from the first promise of *Christ*, Gen 3-15, and therefore the Author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* says, *the Gospel was Preached unto them as well as unto us*) *Idolatry* did not *Unchurch* them. Nor did they loose the Benefits of that Dispensation they lived under, as is plain from *Neb.*-9.-18.-20. This you may easily apply to the case before us, and it will furnish you with a Reason, why *Presbyters* in the *Church of Rome* are received into the *Church of England* without New Orders, viz. because their *Bishops* have not forfeited their Authority, tho' they have grossly abused it.

I will Conclude this part of our Conference, with this General Remark upon what I have offered, by way of Answer to your several Objections.

The Fathers, wherever they speak of the Government of the *Church*, speak of three distinct Orders, viz. *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*; the highest of which Orders had always the Power of Ordination. This *Episcopal Government* they constantly affirm, was derived from the

(a) *Lay Non-Conformity Justified*, p. 13.

## 26 The L A Y-M A N ' s - P L E A S , &c.

*Apostles*; who nominated (*Irenaeus* says) the *Bishops* that were to succeed 'em. And it seems very probable that his Account is true; because (as a late Learned Author says) (a) immediately after the days of the *Apostles*, all the *Churches* were cast into one mould of *Bishop*, *Priest*, and *Deacon*: This taking place every where, and that at a time when no Meetings of the Clergy could be held to establish any such form, and that no Laws of Princes were made to enact it, and no Men of Authority could so early and so universally have brought such a Change into the Order of the Church, when there was nothing to tempt any to affect Preheminence; Labour and Suffering being all that then followed this superior Rank: and yet within less than one Century after the days of the *Apostles*, we do plainly see, that this was the Constitution, even of those *Churches* that had been gathered and settled by the *Apostles* themselves. If this does not prove *Episcopacy* to be of *Apostolical* Institution, I know not what will satisfie you.

I'll now mention the Account which a Gentleman of Note, (b) a Teacher of yours gives of this matter. Christ left (says he) but one sort of standing Rulers in his Church, and they were not single, but in a Plurality, and these were signified by the Word *Presbyters*: But in after times the Chief of these *Presbyters* in a Church, came to be look'd on as in a distinct and higher Office than the rest, and appropriated to himself the Name of *Bishop*, and left the other of *Presbyters* to his Brethren; who were really of the same Office with himself, and since that, Men in using the Terms *Bishops*, and *Presbyters*, have referred to this Difference. An account of the same kind with this you may meet with from another hand. (c)

It is certainly very surprizing, that in an Age of such singular simplicity, and when there were no Motives but what Labour and Sufferings could suggest; Men should affect the *Preheminence*.

But it is very unfortunate that our Advocates for *Presbytery*, after that they have given us such a grave Account

---

(a) Dr. Burnet late Lord *Bishop* of Sarum, in his Discourse concerning the Obligation of Church Communion, p. 96, 97.

(b) Mr. Pierce's *Theses* against Dr. Wells.

(c) Mr Dan. Williams's Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Wright, and Mr. Grosvenor.

of so notable an Alteration, are not able to tell us at what time this Usurpation began, nor in what place, whether in one particular Church, or in many Churches; nor who the Persons were that first began it, or who oppos'd it; for it is very improbable that every Body would comply with such an Alteration, without saying one Word against it. An early dispute about the time of keeping *Easter* stands upon Record, and such a Usurpation as that of *Bishops* over *Presbyters* passes unregarded. A most surprizing Account! The most unaccountable event that ever happen'd since Societies were first Instituted, and Government appointed to preserve the *Peace* and *Order* of 'em. It looks as if all the *Presbyters* of that Age when this Usurpation began, were under the Power of Enchantment; since we have not the least account of any Man that lift'd up a Finger, in Defence of their common Liberty. It is strange that neither Conscience of their Duty, nor averseness from the Pride and Usurpation of others over 'em, should prevail with any one of 'em, to oppose this universal Invasion of the Kingdom of *Jesus Christ*, and the common Liberty of Christians.

Thus Sir, I have considered your Arguments, by which you vindicate *Presbyterian* Ordination, and I think I may say (without Ostentation) I have fairly answer'd 'em. If you have any other Objections against *Conformity*, I will endeavour to answer 'em, so as at least to satisfy you, that I had good reason to leave your Societies; and I shall be glad if I can offer any thing to your Consideration, that may be serviceable to bring you back to the Communion of that *Church*, which you have so *causelessly Separated* from.

*Dif.* I have no manner of Prejudice against the *Church of England*, nor any of its Members. I have no private Views in what I do; God is my Witness, I did not forsake the Church for any Temporal Advantage. It is my own *Edification* that I am chiefly concerned about, and no good Man can with Reason blame me, for using the best means to promote my Happiness. The Liberty that I desire, is only to worship God according to my Conscience, and no Man can reasonably deprive me of this Liberty. The things in dispute are of a middle nature, such as are neither commanded nor forbidden in the word of God; and therefore they ought to be left Indifferent. I am willing to worship God in *Spirit* and in *Truth*; and the fewer of Mens Inventions in a Christian Society met

together for Divine Worship, the better ; for this Reason I chuse to worship God stately, in the way I have made choice of.

*Ch.* That I may give you a fair Answer to your Argument, I will omit saying any thing to that part of it that relates to the *Inventions of Men in the Worship of God* ; 'till we come to speak of those things which you have a particular dislike to in the *Church of England*. And will examine your *Plea*, of having a Liberty of worshipping God according to your Conscience.

But first it is necessary that I lay down this Position, which I am well assured is not only agreeable to the Judgment of all the Old *Nonconformists* ; but to the more modern ones, who have wrote upon this Subject, viz. That every Man is obliged to do all that in him lies, to promote the *Peace* and *Unity* of the *Church of Christ* ; and it is a natural Inference from this Position, that every Man is therefore bound to maintain the *Unity* and *Peace* of that particular *Church* where he lives, if it be a true and sound part of the Body. And ;

Nothing but the imposing of sinful Terms, and requiring us to bear a part in 'em, will justify Separation.

And now I come to examine the pretence of Conscience for Separation.

It is very necessary, in the first Place, that we state the thing right, which we are talking about. According then to the natural signification of the word, *Conscience* is an inward persuasion, founded upon some Reason, apprehended to be true, concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a thing. And if this is a true Definition of Conscience, then it is plain that a bare aversion or dislike to a thing, occasioned by Prejudice, or Education, is not Conscience. The dislike ought to be founded upon some Reason, drawn either from the nature of things, or from the Holy *Scriptures*, or from both. For Instance, if a Man say that he cannot in Conscience join with a Congregation, where the Minister prays in a *Form*, his bare saying so does not prove that Conscience is one jot concerned in the matter ; unless he can prove that *Forms* of Prayer are forbidden by the Word of God, or that they are not adapted in their own nature, to Answer the Ends of publick Prayer : And if the Man cannot do this, it is great odds he is only guided by Humour or Conceit, the Power of Education and Prejudice. Before any Man takes

takes the Liberty to affirm, that he cannot in Conscience comply with this or that *Rite*, or *Ceremony* in the Church of *England*, he ought to lay aside all Prejudice against that particular thing ; and carefully examine the Reasons *pro* and *con* ; (a) and if upon such an enquiry, he cannot satisfy himself in the lawfulness of that thing, but judges that it is unlawful for him to do it ; he may forbear the doing of it. But I cannot see how such a Man can be bound in Conscience industriously to promote *Separation*, and to fill other Persons with a dislike to those things, which they are well satisfied may lawfully be done. And such a conscientious *Dissenter* cannot (for the sake of any Temporal Advantage) conform occasionally to that *Church*, which his Conscience tells him he ought not stately to conform to (not that the Act of joining occasionally with such a Church is a Sin, but) because by occasionally doing it, he allows it to be lawful, and so demonstrates to the World, that he breaks the *Unity* of the *Church*, when he is under no necessity of doing it.

From what has been said already concerning Conscience, it is plain that when a Man is concerned in things indifferent (*j. e.*) such things as are neither commanded or forbidden in the Law of God, he ought to make use of the best means for his Information, before he declares such things to be unlawful, and on that Account breaks the *Unity* of the *Church*.

And one would almost be certain, that if those who have such doubts and scruples about Indifferent things, would only read what has been said by the old *Nonconformists*, concerning the Necessity of Submission to the Rulers of the Church ; in such cases, their doubts and scruples would be all removed : and this leads me to treat upon the other part of your *Plea*, viz. that you ought to have the Liberty of making choice of such a kind of Worship, as you judge most agreeable to the *Scriptures*.

I desire you to consider that all Christians are bound by the Laws of *Jesus Christ*, and the nature of their Holy Religion, to preserve as much as in them lies the *Unity* of the *Church* ; which does not barely lye in making a Profession of the same Faith ; but in joining together with our Brethren in the same religious Communion of Worship and Sacraments.

---

(a) *Treatise of Schism.*

And Since the *Modes* and *Circumstances* of Divine Worship are not determined by the Laws of God, it is beyond dispute, that there is a Power left in the hands of the Governors of the Church, to appoint such *Rules* and such *Forms*, for the Solemn Acts of Worship, as they, in their prudence, think have a tendency to promote Decency, Order, and Edification. And Unless their determinations are contrary to the word of God, they ought to be Submitted to by all Private Christians. *Obedey them* ( says the Apostle ) *that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves to them, for they watch for your Souls as they that must give an Account.* Mr. Baxter says (b) certain things, called Ceremonies, may Lawfully be used in the Church upon humane Imposition; and when they are not contrary to the Law of God, no Person should disobey the Commands of their Lawfull Governors.

Diff. Pray Sir what are you talking about? We are as much for Obedience to our Rulers, as any of our Brethren. (c) But at present there is no Law which requires our Conformity to the *Church of England*, the Act of Toleration having granted us a Liberty of worshipping God according to the Dictates of our own Consciences. So that we don't offend against any Law by our Nonconformity.

*Church.* I hope you will not be offended if I affirm, that the *Act of Uniformity* is not yet repealed, nor any one Act that obliges you to conform to the *Church of England*; And consequently you are as much obliged as ever, to hold Communion with that Church. The *Act of Toleration*, as appears from the Title of it, does not repeal any former Acts, in favour of the *Church*. It only exempts his Majesty's Subjects, dissenting from the *Church of England*, from the Penalties of certain Laws. It does not alter the Nature of them (says a (d) late learned Bishop) nor make an unjust Separation one whit lawfuller, than it was when they were under a severe Yoke. The Law only gives a civil Impunity, and does not punish, but the Cause of Separation is the same that it was, and is neither better nor worse whether the Persons separating, are punished or not. So that if ever it was unlawful, it is so still; and since

(b) *Christian Directory*, p. 398.

(c) *Lay Nonconf.* Page 44.

(d) Dr. Burnet, *Lord Bishop of Sarum*, in his *Preface to his fourth Discourse*.

Communion is the Strength and Ground of all Society, Sacred and Civil, whoever (says Mr. Hales) causeth (a) a Breach, if in Civil Occasions, is guilty of Sedition, or Rebellion: if in Ecclesiastical Differences, is guilty of Schism.

But suppose there was no humane Law that required you to conform to the *Church of England*, the Laws of our holy Religion oblige you to do all that lies in your Power to promote the *Peace* and *Unity* of the *Church* in general. And since you own the *Church of England* to be a true and sound Part of *Christ's holy Catholick Church*, you are bound to continue in the Communion of that Church, unless you can prove that she imposes sinful *Terms*, which those that are her Members are bound to bear a Part in. And if Church-Communion is a Duty laid upon us by God, no humane Authority can releaste us from our Obligations to it: much less then will an Exemption from temporal Penalties (which by former Laws were laid upon such as refused to conform) excuse those from the Guilt of *Schism*, who unjustly withdraw themselves from the Communion of the *Church of England*.

*Diff.* In the Conclusion of your Answer to my last Objection, you seem to insinuate, that *Protestant Dissenters* are *Schismaticks*; I hope you are not so uncharitable as to think so.

*Church*, I have as much Charity for those that differ from me, as the Christian Religion teaches me to have, but I dare not indulge you or any Man in Error or Sin; and under the Notion of being *Moderate*, sooth you in the Sin of Separation. I therefore tell you plainly, that you are guilty of the Sin of *Schism* (as I told you before) unless you have better Reasons for Separation than you have already mentioned.

*Diff.* If this were true, Separation from your *Church* would be a dreadful thing indeed. " But the Guilt of " *Schism* has been so often charg'd on the *Dissenters*, and " they have so frequently and effectually discharg'd them- " selves of it, that the Word does not appear half so ter- " rible as it did formerly, People being grown wiser than " to be scared with Sounds. (b) We separte from your " *National Church*, and yet you cannot pretend its Con- " stitution, as *National*, is of *Divine Right*. Now Sepa-

(a) *Treatise of Schism*, p. 193. (b) *Lay Nonconf.* p. 41.

32 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

ration from a *Church* which the *New Testament* knows not, cannot be the *Schism* which the *Scriptures* warn us against.

*Church*. In order to make good my Charge, I will first consider what *Schism* is. It is by the learned Mr. *Hales* thus defined (e), *Schism is an unnecessary Separation of Christians from that part of the visible Church, of which they were once Members*: (to which I add,) or to which they are bound to ~~to~~ joyn themselves. And it is plain beyond dispute, both from the Writings and Practices of the old *Nonconformists* (f), that they judg'd the *Church of England* a true and sound part of the visible *Church*, and that *Lay-Communion* was not only lawful but necessary. We have always profess'd, (say they) and that in those times when the *Churches of England* were the most, either actually over-spread with *Defilements*, or in the greatest Danger thereof, &c. that we both did and would hold *Communion* with them, as the *Church of Christ*. A Multitude of Passages to this purpose may be quoted from their Writings.

Dr. *Owen* says, " That many Errors in Doctrine, Dis-orders in sacred Administrations, irregular walking in Conversation, with Neglect and Abuse of Discipline in Rulers, may fall out in some *Churches*, and yet not evacuate their *Church-State*, or give sufficient warrant to leave their *Communion*, and separate from them (g). Mr. *Cotton* says, " Unless you find in the *Church Blasphemy*, or *Idolatry*, or *Persecution*, (i. e. such as forces them to leave *Communion*) there is no (h) just Ground of Separation. And we may fairly infer, from the Opinion of those two great Men, that Separation from the *Church of England* is unnecessary.

I'll now proceed to enquire what Things (in the Judgment of the Learned Mr. *Hales*) will justify Separation. I chuse to mention the Opinion of that Au-

---

(e) *Treatise of Schism*, p. 195. 11 *Apologet. nar.* p. 6, Ames Puritanismus Angl.

(f) *The old Nonconformists*, in their confutation of the *Brownists* begun thus, *That the Church of England is a true Church of Christ, and such an one, as from which whosoever wittingly and willingly separateth himself, cutteth himself off from Christ*. See a grave and sober Confutation, p. 1, &c.

(g) *Evangelical Sore*, p. 76.

(h) *Expos. on 1 Epist. of St. John*, p. 156,

thor

thor in this Case, because he is frequently called in by your Friends to clear 'em from the guilt of *Schism*.

But I must first entreat you not to confound *Ministerial* and *Lay Conformity*. There are many things required of Ministers, as Oaths, Subscriptions, &c. which are not required of Lay-men, and for this reason many of the *Nonconformists* did Conform to the Church of *England* as Lay-men (by which they justified Lay-Conformity, and consequently condemn'd Lay-Separation) tho' they could not conform as Ministers. So that they were of the same Mind with the abovenam'd Author, viz. "That Separation is only then necessary, when nothing will save us from the Guilt of Sin but open Separation (i): Or, in other Words, Separation is only necessary, when we cannot continue in the Church without Sin. And to make Separation *Schismatical*, or to make a complete Schism, there must be these two things, says the same Author. "First, the Choice of a *Bishop*, in opposition to the former. Secondly, the Erecting of a new *Church* or *Oratory*, for the dividing Party to meet in publickly, as in the late famous Controversie in *Holland, de Prædestinatione*. As long as the disagreeing Parties went no farther than Disputes, the *Schism* was unhatch'd; but as soon as one Party swept an old Cloyster, and by a pretty Art suddenly made it a *Church* (by putting a new Pulpit in it) for the separating Party to meet in, what before was a Controversie, became a formal Schism (k). The same Author affirms, that the *Donatists* were *Schismatics*, and one of the chief Reasons for their Separation was an Opinion, that where Good and Bad met together for divine Worship, Pollution evaporating (as it were) from Sinners, unhallowed all the Devotions of the Righteous (l). Doubtless they that ran into that *Schism*, pleaded Conscience for their doing so, (as much as our modern Separatists) and were some of 'em afraid of being Partakers in other Mens Sins; yet Mr. *Hales* affirms, that they were compleat *Schismatics*. From hence it's plain, that that learned Author declares Separation from a particular Church to be a *Schism*, without naming any thing of Uncharitableness (which, a late Author says, is the discriminating Badge of *Schismatics*) he took it for grant-

(i) *Treatise of Schism*, p. 195. (k) *Ibid.* p. 196.

(l) *Treatise of Schism*, p. 205, 206.

34 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

ed, that when there was an open Separation, that followed of Course. And after all the Pretences to Charity and Moderation amongst our present Dissenters, there are few Instances of it to be met withal, unless reviling the Clergy, ridiculing the Service, railing at the Constitution, &c. may be reckoned Instances of Charity and good Nature.

Your fine spun notion, that the Church of *England* as *National*, is not pretended to be of divine Right, and therefore that Separation from a National Church, which the New Testament knows not, cannot be the Schism that the Scripture warns us against, is such a piece of Reasoning as can hardly be parallel'd.

If there could be a Schism in the Church of *Corinth* which (according to your mistaken Notion) was a particular Church, pray what should hinder that there cannot be the like Schism in St. *Dunstan's* Church in *London*, which is a part of the National Church; or in any other Parish Church in the Kingdom? But not to insist upon such trifles.

The Catholick Church is made up of several Societies of Christians in the several parts of the World. Therefore,

In order to a Christian's being united to the *Catholick Church*, it is absolutely necessary that he join himself to one particular *Church*, that is a part of the whole: Which the Church of *England* is acknowledg'd to be; or if you like it better, which the several Parish Churches in *England* are parts of.

Whosoever then cuts himself off from one of those particular Churches, (which is a true and sound part of the Catholick Church) does as effectually cut off himself from the whole Body, as he that cuts off a Finger, cuts its off from his Body, tho' it is immediately separated from the hand.

You say that the *Dissenters* have been often charg'd with *Schism*, and have so frequently and effectually discharg'd themselves of it, that the word does not appear half so terrible as it did formerly, People being grown wiser than to be scared with Sounds.

That the *Dissenters* have frequently attempted to clear themselves from the charge, is plain enough; and also that they have such Notions of Schism as were never heard of till very lately, is too notorious to be denied: But that they have proved the Charge to be false, is not so evident, nor can I believe that that is done, till Dr. *Bennet's* charge of *Schism* is fairly answer'd. Whether the World is grown wiser

wiser than to be scared with Sounds, or rather whether they have not continued so long in the guilt of *Schism*, as to become insensible of the heinous malignity of it; requires no great reach of Judgment to determine. If Men are taught to call *good evil, and evil good, to put light for darkness, and darkness for light, &c.* No wonder that they undertake to defend such false Notions as they have been taught are true, and by degrees become insensible of the evil of *Schism*.

I will Conclude this Head with the Excellent Advice of Mr. Baxter to separating Brethren. Be the backwardest to divide and separate, and do it not without a certain warrant and extreme Necessity. Resolve with St. Austin, I will not be the Chaff, and yet I will not go out of the Floor, tho' the Chaff be there. Forsake not the Church that you desire to Reform. (a) Do not meet together in opposition to the publick Meeting, nor yet to make a groundless Schism, or to separate from the *Church* whereof you are Members, nor to destroy the old, that you may gather a New Church out of its Ruines. (b) I beseech you Brethren, mark them which cause *Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them,* Rom. 16, 17, 18.

*Diff.* Is it not very hard, that we must be charg'd with the Sin of *Schism* for not conforming to the uses and customs of the Church of *England*, which are in their own Nature *Indifferent*? Especially if you consider that St. Paul exhorts us to stand fast in the *Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.*

*Ch.* Those things which you mention, that are in their own Nature *Indifferent*, may be comprised under those general Rules relating to *Decency, Order, and Edification*. And since we have no particular Account, what these things are which tend to promote those Ends, we have reason think, that a Power is left in the Hands of proper Officers, which they are to exert, in appointing such Rules as they in their Judgments think are most proper to promote *Decency, Order, and Edification*. Mr. Baxter says that certain things called Ceremonies may lawfully be used in the Church, upon humane Imposition; and when it is not against the Law of God, no Persons

(a) *Cure of Church Divisions*, p. 80.

(c) *Saints Rest*, p. 518.

should

## 36 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &amp;c.

should disobey the Commands of their lawful Governors, (a).

That the Modes and Circumstances of Divine Worship are to be determined by humane Authority, is what I could never see disproved. Under the Law the Constitution was very exact, the *Rites* and *Orders* of it very particular, and the Observation of 'em punctually required; yet they added a great many *Ceremonies* to those which *Moses* commanded them, and alter'd others upon prudential Considerations. They had in their *Paschal Supper* a thick Sawce of Dates, Almonds, and Figs (as a learned Writer Affirms) and yet our *Saviour* observ'd the *Paschal Supper* with this same Addition: (b) The posture of standing at the *Passover* with *Staves in their Hands, and Shoes on their Feet*, was of Divine Institution; yet for a Considerable time before our *Saviour's* coming, (without any Divine Authority) they receded from it, and did eat it in the Posture of discumbency, which was so far from being condemn'd by our *Saviour*, that he conformed to their Practice. Other Instances of this may be met with in the New Testament (i. e.) of Ritual matters, which by the Authority of the Church are entirely laid aside, viz. The use of *Deaconesses* in the Church, (c) the *Love-Feasts* before the *Eucharist*, the dipping of Persons at Baptism, to which (d) St. *Paul* gives a Mystical Signification in two places, the washing of one another's Feet, which seems to be expressly commanded by our *Saviour*: (e) If then the Authority of the Church be so strong as to lay aside Usages that are of Divine and Apostolical Institution, I cannot see why any Persons should be offended at that Article, which lays (f) that the Church has a Power to decree *Rites and Ceremonies*, &c. For certainly a greater degree of Authority is necessary to take away a Practice that has the Face of a plain Commandment in Scripture enjoining it, than for adding such *Rites* as are recommended by new Emergencies. And the doing of this is so far from depriving us of our *Christian Liberty*, that it is rather the Exercise of a main part of it, because we are not tied up so strictly by a Law of Commandments, as the *Jews* were.

---

(a) *Christian Directory*, p. 398. (b) *Late Lord Bishop of Sarum's fourth discourse to his Clergy*, p. 86. *Ibid.* p. 87. (c) 6 Rom. 3, 4, 5. (d) Col. 11. (e) 13 John 14, 15. (f) *Article 20.*

The Liberty that St. Paul bids Christians to stand fast in, is (as a learned Writer (*a*) says) no other than the Liberty which Mankind naturally had before it was restrained by particular Institution, and which is called Christian Liberty, in opposition to the Jews, who had it not under their Law, but were restrained from the practice and use of things, otherwise and in themselves lawfull, by severe Prohibitions; and therefore when the Apostle doth exhort 'em to *stand fast* in it, it was, as the scope of the *Epistle* doth shew, to warn 'em against returning to that Jewish State, and against those who held it necessary for both Jew and Gentile, still to observe all the Rites and Orders of it. Now if the Usages of a Church were of the same kind, or had the same tendency, or were alike necessarily imposed, as those of the *Mosaical Law*, then Christians would be concerned in the Apostle's Exhortation; but where these Reasons are not, our *Liberty* is not at all prejudiced by compliance with them. For the Liberty of a Christian to an indifferent thing, consists in his being perswaded in his Judgment of the Indifferency of it; so that it is the determination of the Judgment in the Opinion of the thing, not in the use of it, that takes away Christian Liberty.

Mr. Baxter says we are bound to obey both Magistrates and Pastors in all things lawful, which belong to their Offices to command. He owns that it belongs to them to command the *Modes* and Circumstances of worship, and says that the Duty of obeying being certain, and the sinfulness of the thing commanded only suspected, and uncertain, we must go on the surer side (*b*) that is, *Obey them that have the Rule over us, and submit ourselves to them.*

*Diff.* If you have said what you design in Answer to my last Objection, I am willing to proceed to those things that I have a dislike to in the Church of *England*, and I intreat you to let me know how you reconciled your self to such Usages as are in that Communion. But first of all I must tell you, that I find it more for my Soul's Advantage to join with the *Dissenters*, than with the Church of *England*. Believe me Sir, it is my (*c*) everlasting Interest that I am consulting, this I am sure is more furthered and promoted by the

(*a*) *Case of Indifferent things stated*, p. 47.      (*b*) *Five disquisitions, &c.* p. 483.      (*a*) *Lay-Non-Conformity Justified*. p. 15.

" way

" way of Worship I have made choice of. So that I  
" act contrary to my best light, and I think offend  
" God, as well as wrong my own Soul, if I did not  
" serve him (statedly I mean) in the way I now do.

Ob. If what you have here said is any thing at all to  
the Purpose, it must amount to this, that every Man is  
at Liberty to break the Communion of the Church, when  
he imagines that he shall be more *Edify'd* by going to sepa-  
rate Assemblies.

I have in part considered this already, when I an-  
swered your Argument (in the former part of our Dis-  
course) by which you endeavoured to prove, that every  
Man is at Liberty to choose what Minister he'll hear. I  
then told you that it would be impossible to maintain  
*Unity and Peace*, if all Men demand this right: And Christi-  
an Societies may (by being divided and subdivided) be  
crumbled into Individuals. Men will be all their Lives  
long seeking after better *Edification, ever Learning, and*  
*never coming to the Knowledge of the Truth.*

I hope you'll excuse me, if I tell you there is nothing  
at all in your pretence of better *Edification*; for there is no  
better *Edification* to be had any where than in the Church  
of *England*, by which I desire you to understand thus  
much, that no separate Assemblies can furnish you with  
better Assurances, to make real Improvement in your  
Spiritual Condition. The Articles of Religion are not  
more clearly proved, or more properly applied. The  
Rules for Holy Living are not more exactly laid down, or  
better enforced, the Prayers are not better composed,  
or sent up to God with more fervency; all the parts  
of Devotion are not better adapted to make a Man a  
good Christian. As for our Sermons, *there were never*  
*better Sermons preach'd since the Apostles days, than have*  
*been preach'd by some of the Bishops and Clergy in*  
*the Church of England.* (a) And in those Parishes where  
Men are not furnished with the best Preachers, they  
have in our excellent Service, all means Necessary to  
Salvation. Whatever is (as one says) Fundamental for  
us to know of the Nature of *God*, may be met with there.  
Whatever we ought to believe of the Nature of *Christ*,  
or his *Offices*, the designs of his coming upon Earth, the  
Constitution of his Reign and Government, the Rewards  
and Punishments of his Laws, &c. We have in the  
*Holy Scriptures* which are constantly Read. We have

(a) Lay-Non-Conformity Justified. p. 18.

'em also wisely Summed up in our Creeds, nothing that is nice and Obscure, fit only for dispute and wrangling, is admitted into our Service, nothing but what tends to promote a Holy life, the End of all Religion.

I am very much afraid that a great many well meaning Persons, take nice and speculative Notions, for very edifying Truths; and are better pleased with a taking Tone and Voice, than with solid Evidence of Truth. I remember about Nine or Ten Years ago, I was at a Weekday Lecture; and heard a Sermon that was far from being one of the best that I ever heard in a Meeting-house: Yet it was very much Admired, especially for this particular thing. The Preacher happened to quote that Text, *It is easier for a Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* He here made a Digression, and told the Auditory that the word καμηλος might properly be Translated a Cable Rope, and this, says he, by being Untwisted, may go thro' the Eye of a Needle (a good ingenious Conjecture, had there been any thing in it, but it was only founded on a Mistake in Phavorinus.) You cannot imagine how this new Exposition pleased their Fancies, and got the Person the Reputation of a most Edifying Preacher. To convince Strangers that he was so, this passage in his Sermon was frequently mentioned.

It is also too Notorious to be denied, that a great many of our Dissenters in *England*, have left the Church only on the account of some dispute they have had with the Minister of their Parish, about Rights and Dues, and then complain they did not Edifie by his Preaching. I could mention some such Instances, if it was proper, but one of your own Teachers, in a Sermon Preach'd at *Taunton*, owns that this is often the Case. And how many Instances may be given, of Persons who would not Conform to the Church of *England*? yet when a late Act was made to prevent the Growth of Schism; rather than lose any Temporal Advantages, they made a shift to shake off all their Scruples of Conscience, all the pretences of better Edification; and Conformed at once, rather than lose any of their Advantages that belong'd to their Stations.

I entreat you to consider seriously, whether we have not in the Church all means necessary to Salvation? Whether Christ doth not hold Communion with our Church? If you deny this, you are Uncharitable to the last degree, and therefore guilty of Schism by your own Confession: But if God hold Communion with a Church  
by

40 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

by his own Ordinances, Grace, and Spirit; it would be unnatural (says Mr. Brightman) and peevish in a Child, to forsake his Mother, while his Father owns her for his Wife.

A sound Faith, and an holy Conversation, are things that are rightly Taught in our Church. And we are sure that she Commands nothing that renders her Communion Sinful; therefore Separation from her, must be Unlawful. I will conclude this Head, with the pathetical Advice of the Presbyterians in *England*, to their separating Brethren. " If we be a Church of Christ, and " Christ hold Communion with us, why do you separate " from us? If we be the Body of Christ, do not they that " separate from the Body, separate from the Head also? " We are loath to say any thing that may offend you, yet " we intreat you to consider, that if the Apostle calls " those Divisions of the Church of Corinth. (a) ( wherein " Christians did not separate into divers formed Congregati- " ons in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper) Schisms, may " not your Secession from us, — and setting up of Con- "gregations of another Communion, be more properly " call'd Schisms? (b)

This by the way is a quite different Notion of Schism from yours, as stated in another part of this Conference, and overthrows the Notion of Schism, as consisting only in Uncharitableness.

When they mention in the same Book, the causes that make a separation Lawful, they don't allow the pretence of better Edification to be a sufficient reason for it. They say first, " When they that separate are grievously, and in- " tolerably Persecuted. Secondly, When the Church they " separate from, is Heretical. Thirdly, When it is Ide- " latrous. Fourthly, When it is the seat of Antichrist; " then is separation Lawful. Now we are fully assured, " that none of these four Causes can be justly charged " upon our Congregations; therefore you must not be " displeased with us, but with your selves, if we blame " you as guilty of positive Schism. (c) If this was thought good Doctrine by the chiefeſt of the Presbyterians in the Year 1649, I know not why it should not be thought ſo ſtill.

I might add to what I have ſaid, an account of the many Diviſions, Schisms, Heresies, &c. that in the laſt

---

(b) *A Vindication of Presbyterian Church Government.* p. 130. (c) p. 114  
Age,

Age, were introduced by Peoples having such a Liberty as you plead for now, viz. of running from one Society to another, for the sake of better *Edification*.

By your saying you think it best to worship God (statedly) in the way you do now, I suppose you mean, that you can upon Occasion go to Church. To which I'll only say, that if concurrence in our Worship be Lawful, and to be done at any time, it must be a Duty which should be done at all times; for nothing but Sinful Terms of Communion can make Separation Lawful; and if you are satisfied that the Terms of Communion are Sinful, then they are never to be complied with.

*Diff.* "After all that you have said, a great many of our Ministers are not only better Christians, but better Scholars than many of your Parsons, tho' they never rub'd their Elbows against a College-wall, and han't so much as an *A. M.* to furnish out a Title Page, or to give 'em a Reputation in the World.

*Church.* Any Man that's unprejudiced must own, that (generally speaking) the Clergy of *England* are Persons of as good Lives and Conversation as any of your Teachers. As for the Learning of both Parties, let any Man that's a competent Judge determine that Dispute, by reading the Books that are Extant, and he'll find that (abating for Numbers) there are vastly more Learned Treatises wrote by Church-men, than have been wrote by Dissenters, and much better Sermons.

I did not imagine, that a Man of your *Moderation* and *Charity*, would speak so Contemptibly of our *Universities*, those famous Nurseries of good Learning and sound Education, which deserve to be Honoured for furnishing us with noble Patriots, and a learned Clergy: A Clergy that have vindicated the Reformation, supported the Protestant Religion, and to whose Learning and faithful Diligence (in the Reign of King James the Second, when Popery was coming in upon us like an overflowing Flood) we owe our present happy Establishment, and consequently to them you owe the Act of Indulgence.

I am surprised to find you pick up a scrap of Mr. *Bisset's* Wit, to banter a Master of Arts Degree, when some of your Teachers have been at the pains of a long Journey into *Scotland*, to get a Feather to put in their Caps; and others have taken a Degree there by Proxy, tho' the Majority furnish out their Title Pages with

42 The L A Y-M A N ' S - P L E A S E S & C O M M U N I C A T I O N S

V. D. M. instead of the old Cant, *Minister of the Gospel*. But pray Sir, what is it that you dislike in our Clergy? for you seem to have no very good Opinion of 'em.

Diff. It has been observed that many of your Countrey Parsons, are not distinct and clear in their Method, their Discourses being more like Declamations than Sermons.

Their Subjects don't always seem to be so well chosen. *Jesus Christ* and the Method of Salvation by a Redeemer, the great Doctrine of Regeneration, the Nature, Conditions, and Benefits of the Covenant of Grace, &c. being very seldom insisted on, which is complained of by a worthy Doctor of your own, in an Excellent Treatise.

" And in my Opinion they don't shew that concern  
" and earnestness in their Discourses, that the great Bu-  
" sinels of saving Souls calls for.

Their Sermons are full of bitter Invectives against such as dissent from them, which is very unbecoming them, and does much mischief amongst their Hearers. " But if  
" their Sermons were composed with never so much Judg-  
" ment, (a) and delivered with never so much seeming  
" Warmth and Affection, yet when the Preacher's Con-  
" versation is a Contradiction to his Doctrine; a Dis-  
" course from such a Man's Mouth has not so good an In-  
" fluence as else might be expected. That this is too fre-  
" quently the Case, I am very unwilling to insinuate;  
" but whether I mention it or no, it is too notorious to  
" escape the World's Observation. For this Reason I  
forsook the Church, and can you blame me for it?

Ch. Your long Harangue against the Countrey Clergy, is no Justification of your *Nonconformity*, if every thing you have said was true; for unless the Minister of your Parish is justly chargeable with every thing you have said, it can by no means affect your particular Case. And if he was, that would by no means justify your Separation, unless you will affirm, that the Efficacy of his Ministriations depends on his personal Sanctity.

It has been the constant Practice of your Teachers, by false and base Insinuations, to bring the Clergy into disrepute; on purpose to promote the Interests of their *Separate Meetings*. That the Sermons of the Countrey Clergy are Methodical, is very plain from the many that are in Print, which have been preach'd in Countrey Congregations. I know no way that you have to judge of

---

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 19.

the rest, but by those that come abroad, for you seldom or never hear any of 'em. They don't shred a Subject into Divisions and Subdivisions, as some of their Neighbours do.

I could never find but that the Subjects they preach upon, are chosen with good Judgment, and in all respects adapted to Answer the Ends of preaching. They seldom preach upon such moving Subjects out of the *Canticles*, as your Teachers often make choice of, such as, *King Solomon made himself a Chariot of the Wood of Lebanon. (a) He made the pillars thereof of Silver, the bottom thereof of Gold, the covering of it of Purple; the midst thereof being paved with Love for the Daughters of Jerusalem.* Yet they Endeavour to acquaint their Parishioners, with all the Fundamental Principles of Religion, and with proper Arguments, excite their Congregations to the Practice of all those Vertues that the Christian Religion enjoyns; for proof of this, I refer you to the Discourses of several of the Countrey Clergy now in Print. I don't think its worth any Man's while, to take any notice of that Scandal thrown upon the Clergy, by a late old Peevish Doctor, in a Book call'd *the Preacher*. Any one that has read the Book, may quickly see what stress the Doctor lays upon the preaching up some particular Doctrines, and how little they would tend to the *Edifying* of a plain honest Countrey Auditory, such as *Reprobation, Election, &c.*

I doubt not, but our Countrey Clergy, are Honest and Sincere in all their Ministrations, and are heartily desirous to promote Christianity amongst those whom the Divine Providence has committed to their Charge. If you judge of their earnestness and concern, by a vehement eager way of Expression, by distorted Countenances, and whining Notes, your Teachers generally out-do our Clergy, in this kind of Oratory.

I am very well assured, that I have heard more bitter Reflections upon the Clergy of the Church of *England*, from your Teachers, than I ever heard or Read in any Sermons preach'd in the Church, upon *Dissenters*. But here lies the Misfortune; This in your Teachers, is zeal for the cause of God; but a modest Vindication of the Constitution of our Church, is in our Clergy, Railing, Backbiting, &c. That this is very often the Case, Mr. Standen one of your Teachers Ingenuously owns. In short

---

(a) *Solomon's Song, ch. 3. v. 9, 10.*

## 44 The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &amp;c.

if I was only to be governed by that popular Argument, of going where there was the best Preaching, I could not wrong my Judgment so far, as to go to your Meeting-Houses.

I am very sorry, that after the Declarations you have made, that you have no prejudice against the Church of England, (b) or any of its Members, that Uncharitableness is what you cannot charge your self with, and call'd God for your witness: you give me such just Reason to affirm, that you have both Prejudice and uncharitableness against the Church and her Members. What else could make you after such an *Unchristian* manner, Insinuate that the Country Clergy are Men of Immoral Conversations, and then gravely wipe your Mouth, and pretend you would not say this, if what you Insinuate was not too Notorious to escape the World's Observation. If this is the Charity that you have learnt from your Teachers, *though they spoke with the Tongues of Angels* (were better Preachers than any in the whole Christian World besides,) I am taught by the *Apostle* to look upon 'em, but as *Sounding Brass, or Tinkling Cymbals*, 1 Cor. 13. 1. you cannot justly be Offended with me, if what I have said sound Harsh and Severe; The contempt I see cast upon Men of worth, does a little (a) move me, and I cannot help it. I desire you to proceed to your other Objections.

*Diff.* I don't like the Forms of Prayer in the Church of England. It is to me much more agreeable, for the Minister to Offer up the Prayers of the Congregation, in such Words as he thinks most proper, and by this means he can suit himself to the Necessities of the People.

*Church.* Don't you think that a *Form of sound Words*, is vastly preferable to the *Extempore Effusions* of your Teachers?

*Diff.* " The Method of Prayer amongst our Ministers " is usually Studied, at least in the first Year of their " Ministry, (b) 'till long practice has furnished them " upon all occasions. And their Prayers are not, as ma- " ny imagine, *Extempore Effusions*.

*Church.* If the Method of Prayer is Studied, then what was commonly called the *Gift of Prayer*, and *Praying by the Spirit*, is at last confess'd to be an Art, as much as Rea-

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 15. 42.

(b) *Ibid.* p. 15.

## The LAYMAN'S PLEAS &c. &c. 45

soning in Mode and Figure ; and your Publick Prayers appear to be *Forms*. If so, then why cannot you joyn with the Prayers of our Church, as well as with *Forms* composed by your Teachers ?

*Diff.* I'll tell you in a few Words. Our Ministers, tho' they think upon the Matter and Order of their Prayers before they appear in Publick, yet they are not tied up to one invariable Form of Words, as your Clergy are : But a Minister in our Way of Worship, can suit himself to the Circumstances of the People he belongs to. (b) For as our Sins, Wants, and Mercies, are not every Day the same : So our Confessions, Petitions, and Thanksgivings, should vary as they do. There are also some Emergencies which stated Forms of Prayer may not be suited to. And Lastly, I find that the hearing the same Words, is apt to damp my Devotion ; variety is grateful, and tends to keep up Attention, and I find it so in Prayer. For these Reasons I choose to joyn with the *Dissenters* in Praying, &c.

*Church.* What you mention, of a Minister's being able in your way of Praying, to suit himself to the Circumstances of the People he belongs to, is only fiction. The most Intelligent Person amongst your Ministers, does not know the Circumstances of one tenth part of the Congregation, that meet together for Divine Worship in *Salters-hall* : So that he can only suit his Prayers to their Circumstances, considered as a *Society*.

Now the common Cases, and Necessities of Christians, are for the main always the same ; and therefore may much more easily be comprehended in a well-prepared *Form of Prayer*, than in what you call conceiv'd Prayer ; for Publick Prayers ought not to descend to particular Cases and Necessities, because they are the Prayers of the whole Congregation, and therefore ought to comprehend no more than what is more or less every Man's Case and Necessity ; they ought to confess Sin in no other particular Instances of Aggravations, than such as are justly chargeable upon a Congregation of Christians ; nor to petition, or return thanks for any other Mercies, but what a Christian Congregation may be suppos'd either to stand in need of, or to have receiv'd ; Because the *Confession*, *Petition*, and *Thanksgiving*, are made in the Name of the whole Congregation, and

---

(b) *Lay Non-Conformity Justified*, p. 21, 22.

therefore

## 25 The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c.

therefore ought to comprise nothing in 'em, but what is the common case of all, and what ev'ry one may truly and sincerely joyn with. Those things which are properly the subject Matter of Confession in a Congregation, are and will be always the same, which are excellently comprised in the General Confession in our Service. The Mercies we are to Petition for in Publick-prayer, are such as all Christians have a common need of, and ought to be concern'd for. Such as the forgiveness of our Sins, the Peace of our Consciences, the Assistance of Divine Grace, to deliver us from the power of Sin and Satan, and to make us meet to be partakers of Eternal Happiness, &c. Now since our Publick Service is suited to all the common Necessities of Christians, so that there is no Sin but we are taught to pray to be delivered from, nor any Blessing but what we are taught to ask; why should any Person forsake the *Communion* of the *Church*, on the Account of our *Prayers*?

As for the Emergent Cases which our stated *Forms of Prayer* do not reach, this is no Reason at all why the *Common-Prayer* should be entirely rejected. It ought to be used so far as it comprehends the Common Cases and Necessities of the People, and if a Congregation receive any eminent Blessing, such as Deliverance from any Danger; the *Minister* may in his Prayer in the Pulpit (which our Church allows) return thanks for such Mercy. If it is a *Natural* Blessing that calls for our Thankfulness, such as the Vanquishing of a common Enemy, we have care taken to provide Forms for such Extraordinary Occasions, and if a *Minister* has a mind to Offer up Praises to God in the Congregation, he is permitted to do it the first opportunity.

*Lastly*, You say that the hearing of the same Words constantly, damps your Devotion; whereas Variety is grateful, and tends to keep up Attention. You wou'd do well to consider, what it is that this Variety of Expression doth keep your Mind upon: It cannot be upon the Matter of Prayer, for as I observ'd before, that either is, or ought to be generally the same; because the common Necessities of Christians are so. If it was the Matter of *Prayer*, that would be as carefully attended to, if it was always the same, as well as when dress'd in New and Varied Expressions. It is only the Phrase then that can engage your Attention, and what is there in this, but only an Agreeable Surprize and Amusement of

your

Your Fancy, which instead of fixing, must certainly unfix the Mind from the Internal Acts of Prayer, and divert its Attention from the Devotion, to the Oratory of Prayer. And this, if you will impartially consider matters, is so far from being an Advantage, that 'tis really a Distraction to their Devotion. The late Learned Bishop of Sarum says, "Extemporany Prayers do rather kill than feed true Devotion, since they must be hearkened to as Discourses, which is a Distraction to him that prays after them; whereas those accustomed to Set Forms, have only the things themselves that their Devotions relate to, in their View; so that they are certainly less tempted to Distraction, than they must be who follow the other way. And the same Learned Prelate says a little after, "If Men grow too languid and flat in them, even this is much more supportable than the gross Affections, and scandalous Indecencies that are so common, to say no worse, in the tumultuary way. (c) —— Speaking of those Raptures, occasioned by soft and melting Expressions, that Pious Author says, "They ought not to be let in upon Publick Assemblies, which being made up of a great variety of Tempers, must be Entertain'd only with such Devotions that suit with all their Conditions, and do equally quadrate to all their Necessities; and thus it is not only natural, but necessary for all Men who will maintain Order in their Worship, and will frame it in so diffus'd an Extent, as to take all Equally within it, that they have Set and *Stated Forms*; and these ought to be cast into the plainest and most comprehensible Simplicity possible, since that is always suited to all Mankind, whereas Men are vastly diversified in every thing that is Lively or Fanciful.

I am unwilling to be tedious, or else I would offer to your Consideration several other Reasons, to prove the Excellency of *Set Forms* of Prayer.

*Diff.* Pray don't mistake me; I am no such Enemy to *Forms* as you may imagine, I own their *Lawfulness*, and in some Cases their *Expediency*, ay, and *Necessity* too; and a *Scriptural Form* of Prayer I can heartily join in, but I beg leave to offer a few things on this part of the Controversy, *viz.*

---

(c) Lord Bishop of Sarum, his Obligation to Church Communion, p. 97, 98.

48 The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c.

I have read that in the first Three Hundred Years, there were no printed *Liturgies*, or *Imposed Forms of Prayer*, but every one that officiated, deliver'd himself in such Terms as best pleas'd him : So that Forms seem to be introduced in a time of Degeneracy, when Men's Devotion was languishing (a).

Ch. If Forms of Prayer are Lawful, and may be used without Sin, I am sure you are much in the wrong to urge the having of 'em as a Reason to justifie your Separation. You say you can heartily join in a *Scriptural Form of Prayer*, by which you insinuate that ours is not so; I will take the Liberty to affirm with a Learned Prelate, that our Forms have as few defects, are as little liable to Objections, and are indeed as perfect, not only as the *Forms* or *Liturgies* of any Church that we know of, Antient or Modern, but are as perfect as we can in Reason expect any thing that came from Men not immediately Inspired. Dr. Burnet late Lord Bishop of Sarum.

In Answer to your Assertion, that in the first Three Hundred Years (I suppose you mean after our Saviour's time) there were no Printed *Liturgies* : I have read in a noted Author, that the Jews had a *Liturgy* in our Saviour's time, and that he was so far from condemning it, that he himself prescrib'd his *Disciples* a *Form*, and composed it out of theirs, laying together so many Petitions drawn out of their Prayers, as answer'd his end in appointing his own. if then our Saviour did not condemn the *Forms* that were extant in his time, but rather approved of 'em, by collecting a short Form out of theirs, which he commanded his Disciples to use ; this plainly proves that there were Forms of Prayer in his time.

I readily grant that in the first Age, there was a Gift of Praying by immediate Inspiration, by which Men were enabled to offer up such Prayers to God, as comprehended the Necessities of whole Congregations ; and this as St. Chrysostome says, was called by the Apostle a Spirit (b), it appearing in those *Prayers*, that the Spirit in him that prayed searched all their Hearts, which prov'd that this was the Spirit of God, making Intercession for the Saints, in the Mouth and Words of the

(a) Lay-Nonconformity Justified. p. 22.  
in Rom. chap. 8. v. 26.

(b) Chrysostom  
inspired

Inspir'd Person. And while this Gift continued, (which how long it was we are not perfectly certain) perhaps there was no other *Form* of Prayer used but the *Lord's-Prayer*. I hope you will not affirm that your Teachers have the like Gift. You own that in the first Year of their Ministry, the Matter and Order of their Prayers is generally Studied, and any one that is acquainted with your *Seminaries* will tell you, that they are as much trained up in that Art, as any Mechanick is in his Trade. So that this Ability in Prayer, may be deduced from an Original far short of Inspiration. It is highly probable, that upon the Ceasing, or Abatement of this *Spirit of Prayer*, it was in most places immediately supplied by *Forms of Prayer*, which were composed by some Eminent Persons, according to the Method and Order of those *Inspired Apostolical Prayers*. And since you are not able to give me an Account when *Forms* were first introduced, but only tell me they were introduced in a Time of Degeneracy, when Men's Devotion was Languishing; my Account of the Matter seems most probable. For if this way of Praying had not been introduced till after the first Three Hundred Years, it wou'd have been a most Observable Innovation upon the *Primitive Christianity*, and the Introducers of such *Forms* would, it is very likely, have been Complained of, and severely Censured for doing it. If you reply, that there were many Innovations crept into the Church very early, without any Opposition; I must desire you to mention one that was of such a publick Nature as this.

But least this may not be thought a direct, plain, full Answer to your Objection, I will briefly mention some *Liturgies* that appear to be more Antient than the time you make mention of. I have read of a *Liturgy* which (tho' greatly corrupted now) was generally thought to be composed by St. James, and was of great Authority in the Church of Jerusalem. St. Cyril wrote a Comment upon it, and it is declared by *Proclus Archbishop of Constantinople*, and the Sixth General Council, to be St. James's own Composure (a); which is a plain Argument of the great Antiquity, if not *Apostolicalness* of it; for St. Cyril flourished in the Year 350, and wrote this Comment in his Younger Years (as a Learned Author has proved in a little Book wrote in Vindication of Forms of

(a) Allat. de Liturg. S. Jacob. -- Concil. Trull. c. 32.

50 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

Prayer) which, considering the great Authority that it had been of in the Church of *Jerusalem*, it must upon a moderate Computation be wrote before the time you mention.

The Learned Mr. *Reeves* in his Apologies, particularly in his Notes upon the Apology of *Justin Martyr*, gives very substantial Reasons to prove, that in *Justin's* time, they had *Forms of Prayer* in the Church.

It is plain beyond all Controversy, that in the Earliest and best Ages of the Church, they had Hymns of Praise, which they constantly used in their Religious Assemblies. Now Praises seeming to be the Sublimest Acts of Worship, in which the Soul ought to arise to its highest Elevation, it's hardly to be accounted for, why they should use *Forms of Praise* and not of *Prayer*, unless you'll own that they thought *Forms* helps to Devotion.

What some of your Brethren urge against *Forms of Prayer*, is very little to the purpose, That *Homilies* may as well be used as such *Forms*. They do not consider that conceived or free Prayer is as much a Form to the Auditory, as the Reading of a Homily. And if a Minister is guilty of a sinful Omission, in not using what you call the *Gift of Prayer*, can you believe God will reject your sincere Devotions, because the Person that utters the Prayers, is guilty of a sinful Omission ? If you don't think so, the using of a *Form of Prayer* cannot Justifie your *Nonconformity*. Many Reasons may be given for having prescribed *Forms of Prayer*, which will not equally prove the Necessity of *Forms* for Preaching. And unless your Teachers, who say, that Ministers may as well be trusted with the making their own Prayers, as with the making their Sermons ; will be so free as to tell us, that they take the same pains in composing *Forms of Prayer* for their Congregations, as they do in composing Sermons, we have no Reason to take any Notice of such trifling Objections against our *Common-Prayer*.

They who use this as an Argument against *Forms of Prayer*, viz. That we have no Command in Scripture for the prescribing a Set *Form of Prayer*, would do well to prove that we have an express Promise, that the *Gift of Prayer*, which the *Apostles* had, is to be continued to all succeeding Ages. If they cannot produce such a full, plain Promise, then the want of that Gift must necessarily be supplied by Stated *Forms*; if we will be Regular in our Devotions. But why do I lose time in proving that *Forms*

## The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c. 51

of Prayer are Expedient and Necessary? You have already told me, that your Ministers study the Method and Matter of their Prayers. The dispute then between you and I must be upon the Expediency of the *Forms of Prayer* used in the Church of *England*; and I desire you to tell me Ingenuously, what it is that you dislike in our most Excellent *Liturgy*?

*Diff.* I own, I think the Matter of it to be for the most part Good, and the Prayers such as I can without Scruple joyn in. I also reckon it an extraordinary Work, considering at what Time, and in what Circumstances it was Composed. (a) But it has been Amended more than once already, since it was first made, and I presume it will be no Crime to say, that it is not yet so Compleat, but it might in many Particulars be altered to very good Advantage. I should for my own part like the *Liturgy* much better if it were drawn up in *Scripture Expressions*. If the *Confessions*, *Petitions*, and *Thanksgivings*, were more Particular. If the Multitude of *Collects* were brought into one or two longer Prayers, read by the Minister alone, the People only saying *Amen* at the Conclusion. These Sir, are things that I dislike in your *Liturgy*. (b)

*Ch.* I am glad to find that you are so Moderate, as to own that the Matter of our *Common-Prayer* is for the most part Good, and the Prayers such, as you can without Scruple join in. But I am Astonished to find, that after such an Ingenuous Confession, you should mention such inconsiderable Objections against it, to justifie your Non-conformity. Let me tell you that in doing thus, you deviate from the Principles and Practice of the Old *Non-conformists*. Can you without Scruple join in the Prayers of our Church, and will you for the sake of a few small inconsiderable Objections that may be made ( which may all be easily Answered,) break the *Communion* of the *Church*, and destroy that *Unity*, which as a *Christian* you ought to Maintain?

Can you sit down, and soberly and calmly think upon the Obligations that you are under to promote *Unity* and *Peace*, without coming to this Resolution; That the *Church* which you acknowledge to be a True and Sound part of the *Catholick Church*, and such as you can occasionally join with, in all Acts of Worship, ought not to be forsaken? and if you cannot join with such a *Church*

---

(a) *Lay-Non-Conformity Justified*. p. 23. (b) *Ibid.* p. 24.

52 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

as I have just mentioned, in all Acts of Worship ; yet you ought to join with her in all such Things as you Lawfully may ; and not give any other Disturbance to the *Peace* and *Order* of it, than what your Forbearance will give in those things that you dislike. But to proceed in an Examination of your Objections. " You say, you " reckon the English *Liturgy* an Extraordinary Work, " considering at what Time, and in what Circumstances " it was Composed.

It is certainly so ; and I am very much inclined to believe, that if it was to be laid aside, (which God forbid) we should have no such Prayers offered up to God in Publick ; no, not by the most *Gifted-Men* of your Party, as there are in our Excellent Service-Book. And Thousands of good Christians in *England*, would earnestly and constantly Pray for the Restoration of it. If I was not resolved against saying any thing that might Provoke and Exasperate you, I would mention some Expressions that I have heard in some of your publick Prayers, which fall much short of that Spirit of Devotion, that is in the *Common Prayer*. If any Man will lay aside all *Prejudice*, and carefully read over a late Excellent Book, Entitled *The Beauty of Holiness in the Common Prayer*; I am apt to Imagine, that he will acknowledge it to be a *Form of sound Words*, and fitted to promote *Edification*, if ever there was any such thing since the *Apostles Days*. They that affirm, that if the worthy Compilers of it were now Alive, they would alter it, seem to be Strangers to it, and Affirm they know not what.

You Object, that it has been Amended more than once already, since it was first Compiled, and you think it capable of being altered to very good Advantage. The late Learned *Bishop of Sarum* says, " Any small Objections that may be made against it, as they do all admit of very good Answers ; so can never be put in the Balance with the *Peace* and *Order* of the Church ; and the *Edification* that the Members of one Body might receive from such pure and Spiritual Devotions. (a)

The Alterations that have been made, are very inconsiderable ; but what those are which you think may still be made, I cannot determine ; only 'tis very likely, that

---

(a) *The Obligation of Church Communion.* p. 98.

if our *Common-Prayer* was to be put into yours, and your Brethren's Hands, to be Revised and Amended, you would deal with it once more, as your Fore-fathers did, and (it may be) not substitute any better *Prayers* in the room of it, than they did then. But waving this, I'll recommend to you the Advise of Mr. *Hilderſham* in his Lectures, *viz.* to come to the very beginning of the Publick Worship, and to prefer it before any of your private Duties. So far was that Old Non-Conformist from encouraging Separation on the Account of any seeming Faults or Defects in it. *Brightman, Ball, Bradshaw*, and several other Nonconformists, wrote very strenuously against Separation on any such Accounts. But alas! the good honest Notions which they had of the Mischiefs of it, are by a long continuance in the Sin, quite worn out of the Minds of our Modern Non-conformists, and they now boast that they are grown wiser than to be scar'd with Sounds.

If the next Age makes as large Advances to *Libertinism* as this has done, it's probable, that it will then be admitted as sound Doctrine, that no Persons in this Kingdom can possibly be guilty of *Schism*.

You should like our *Liturgy* much better, you say, if it was drawn up in Scripture Expressions. I am sure it is as Agreeable to the Canon of Holy Scripture, as any Prayers that I have heard in any *Meeting-house* in *London*; nay much more so. But unless you can prove that it containeth such things as are contrary to *Holy Scripture*, your Objection has nothing in it that deserves an Answer. Mr. *Raxter* says it is not of such Necessity to take the Matter and Words out of the *Holy Scriptures*, but that we may joyn in a *Liturgy*, if the *Form* of Words be not from Scripture. (a) Especially when the *Peace* of the Church requireth it.

I don't see of what Advantage it would be to have our *Confessions* more particular. *Confessions* of Sin ought to be such as a whole Congregation may freely joyn in, and 'tis very likely, if thole who dislike our *Confessions*, were employed to compile others, they would be hard put to it to compose such as were Agreeable to a whole Congregation. For they must be Obliged (if they will compose one that may be useful) to have it such as good Christians may safely joyn in.

---

(a) *Christian Directory*. p. 847.

Those particular *Confessions*, *Petitions*, and *Thanksgivings*, which you want to have in our *Liturgy*, are not properly the Matter of that Publick Service we are daily to Offer unto God in Religious Assemblies, but of that Private Devotion which is necessary to be perform'd in our Closets. And if we humble our selves for our particular Sins, and earnestly beg pardon and forgiveness at the Hands of God in Secret, we shall then be disposed for those General *Confessions* that are in our Publick Service.

Your Objection against the Shortness of our *Collects*, seems very ill grounded. Mr. Baxter says " Those *Forms* of *Liturgy* which are now most distasted, were brought in by the most Zealous, Religious People at first: the many short *Invocations*, *Versicles*, and *Responses*, which the People use, were brought in when the Souls of the Faithful did abound with Zeal, and in Holy Fervours break out in such Expressions, and could not well endure to be bare Auditors, and not vocally to bear their part in the *Praises of God*, and the *Prayers of the Church*. (a)

I hope Sir, the Shortness of a Prayer is not to be found fault with by any understanding Christian, since this would be to disparage that *Form of Prayer* which our *Lord* taught his *Disciples*, it being not much longer than most of our *Collects*, and not so long as some of 'em. Besides, the Work of Praying is as much continued all the while, in the use of our short *Collects*, as if there were but one continued *Form*, and the frequent saying *Amen*, is so far from hindring Attention, that it rather tends to excite it. But I suppose you will hardly admit that as a good Argument to vindicate the Shortness of our *Collects*, that they are upon that Account, the more like that *Form of Prayer*, which *Christ* taught his *Disciples*; because many of your Teachers are utterly against the using the *Lord's Prayer* as a *Form*.

*Diff.* " The Minister I hear, uses it, and the Assembly of Divines recommend it; so that our Contemning (b) the *Lord's Prayer*, which some dealers in Scandal have so confidently charg'd us with, is a Notorious *Falsity*.

*Ch.* I am far from drawing up such a heavy Charge against you, as that of Contemning the *Lord's Prayer*, but I may

---

(a) *Cure of Ch. Divisions.* p. 200. (b) *Lay-Noncon. Justified.* p. 25.  
very

very safely affirm, that I never heard it used in one half of the *Meeting-houses* that I have been at in *London*, and you must own that the Number of those that use it, compared with those who neglect it (amongst your Teachers) is very inconsiderable. If there was occasion for it, I could tell you who the Persons are that used it in *Salters-hall*, at the Lecture held there every *Tuesday*; only this I'll tell you, that the Majority of those that officiated there, did not use it, about nine Years ago. I hope you will not undertake to Vindicate those who omit the *Lord's Prayer* in their Publick Prayers, since our *Saviour* has expressly said, *When ye Pray, say, Our Father*, &c. (a)

*Diff.* Have a little Patience, and I'll tell you my Sentiments concerning this Prayer, *in which (b) I agree with most Dissenters I have yet convers'd with.* "We have no Account that the *Apostles* did in their Assemblies constantly joyn in the Use of this Prayer, nor indeed the least hint that they ever so much as once did so. There seems (also) to be a great deal of Reason to think, that our *Lord* never intended to oblige his followers to the use of the same Words invariably; if he had, I believe the *Evangelists* would have recorded this Prayer in the same Words; which they have not done. Which Difference in the two *Evangelists* (c) enclines me to think, that our *Lord* design'd no more than to give his Disciples a Directory for *Prayer*. If he did, I would be glad to know whose Words we are obliged to use. I have read that this *Prayer* was frequently omitted by the *Primitive Christians*. If after all you insist upon it, that *when ye pray, say, &c.* must be understood as a Command to pray in these Words, I don't see how the Use of any other Prayers, not those of the *Liturgy* it self can (according to this Notion) be justifiable.

*Ch.* I find (contrary to my Expectation) that you are an Advocate for those who neglect to use the *Lord's Prayer* as a *Form*. I will briefly examine your Arguments, by which you Vindicate those who deny that the *Lord's Prayer* is a *Form*.

You say in the First place, that we have no Account that the *Apostles* did in their Assemblies ever once use

---

(a) Luke 11. 2. (b) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 25. (c) *Ibid.* p. 26.

this Prayer. This Sir is a very fallacious way of Reasoning, which I'll convince you of in a few Words, by putting your Argument into a better form.

Those things which the Scripture gives no Account of, as done by the *Apostles*, were never done by them.

But we have no Account that the *Lord's Prayer* was ever used as a *Form* by the *Apostles*. Therefore

The *Apostles* never used the *Lord's Prayer* as a *Form* of Prayer.

Unless you will affirm (which is what I am confident you dare not) that we have a perfect Account of whatever was done by the *Apostles*, in their Religious Assemblies, your Argument must necessarily fall to the Ground, because it must depend upon the Truth of that Assertion; so that the sequel in the Major proposition, viz. *That those things which the Scriptures give no Account of as done by the Apostles, were never done by them*, is most certainly false.

Tho' no mention be made in the New Testament, of the *Apostles* and *Disciples* using the *Lord's Prayer* as a *Form*, yet this is no Argument either that they did not use it, or that they did not believe themselves obliged to use it. Because that gives us no particular Account what Prayers they used in their Religious Assemblies, and is as good an Argument to prove that they used none at all: But farther,

If I affirm that the *Apostles* (tho' Commanded by Christ himself) did not Baptize in the *Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; my Assertion has as good a Foundation as yours hath, viz. *That the Disciples did not use the Lord's Prayer*, tho' Christ commanded 'em when they prayed, to say, *Our Father, &c.* because you cannot give me any one Instance, to prove that ever they made use of the abovementioned *Form* in Baptism.

It is also more than probable, that they (*i. e.* the *Disciples*) used the *Lord's Prayer*, because they who lived nearest the Apostolical Ages, did make use of this as a *Form* in their Religious Assemblies. *Tertullian* discoursing of the *Lord's Prayer* says, that *Novis Discipulis, Novi Testamenti Christus novam Orationis Formam determinavit.* (*i. e.*) That Christ hath instituted a *New Form of Prayer for his New Disciples*. St. Cyprian saith, *Fratres dilectissimi, Oremus sicut Magister docuit. Scil. Let us pray as our Master hath taught us.* St. Gregory expressly Affirms, that

the

## The LAY-MAN'S-PLEAS, &c. 57

the Apostles themselves did always at the Consecration of the *Eucharist*, make use of the *Lord's Prayer* (a). And this may serve also for an Answer to what you Affirm, that this Prayer was frequently omitted by the *Primitive Christians*.

I come next to consider your Argument drawn from the Variations in the two *Evangelists*. If you apprehend any considerable Difference between Ετοι επι πρεγενεχεσθε Pray thus, or after this manner; and Οταν πρεγενεχεσθε, λέγετε When ye pray, say, acknowledging the Sence in the former to be dubious, and in the latter to be plain and uncontestable; 'tis a known Rule that the doubtful and ambiguous Text, should be determined by the plain and express Text. After this manner pray ye carries a double Sence, and leaves room either to use the Lord's Prayer as a *Form* or *Directory*. But, when ye pray, say, &c. plainly enjoyns the using that Prayer as a *Form*. Now if the abovementioned Rule is a good one, then the plain Sence is this, When ye Pray, use this Form of Words which I here give you, Our Father, &c. (b) Mr. Baxter says, If the *Lord's Prayer* was only a *Directory* for Prayer and not a *Form*, it would be, Pray to God your Father in Heaven, that his Name may be Hallowed, &c. and not *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

But not to insist on the little variations in the two *Evangelists*, which ought not to be urg'd as a reason against using the *Lords-Prayer*: I will allow that Prayer, as recited by St. Matthew, is a *Directory* for Prayer; but as recited by St. Luke, it is a *Form*. The former was given them in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the second Year after our Lord's Baptism. The latter was given to the *Disciples*, upon their own request, about a Year and half after that, as is commonly thought. 'Tis probable, that when it was first given to 'em, they look'd upon it as a *Directory*, or *Copy*; for if they had not done so, why should they (a considerable time after) ask their Master to Teach 'em to Pray as John Taught his *Disciples*? In Answer to this their Request, he gave them the Prayer that he had before delivered to them in his Sermon, and enjoyned them to use it as a *Form*; Commanding them, when they Pray, to say, Our Father, &c. From which Account it's very plain, that the *Lord's Prayer*, as delivered by St. Luke,

---

(a) Epist. lib. 7. cap. 6. (b) Five Disputations. p. 363.

## 58 The L A Y-M A N ' S - P L E A S , &c.

is a Form of Prayer, which the *Disciples* were enjoyn'd to use as such: And this is a full Answer to your Question, viz. *I would gladly know whose Words we are to use?*

Your last Argument, to prove that the *Lord's Prayer* is not to be used as a Form, is a very strenuous one, viz. If, *when ye Pray, say, &c.* must be understood as a Command to Pray in these Words: I don't see how the use of any other *Prayers* can ( according to this Notion ) be Justifiable.

I hope the Learned Dr. *Hammond* will not be accused of putting a force upon the Words, who thus Paraphrases 'em. "Whosoever ye Pray Solemnly, omit not "this Form of Words. If your Argument would hold good, it may easily be proved, that a Man is to Pray no where but in his Closet; because *Christ Jesus our Lord Commands us saying, But thou, when thou Prayest, enter into thy Closet.* (a) I hope what I have said, may be enough to Convince you, that the *Lord's Prayer* is to be used not only as a Directory, but as a Form; and when ever you use it, I entreat you to be hearty and sincere in that Petition, *and lead us not into Temptation*, which you have just Reason to be, when you consider by what Arguments you are Taught to justifie your Separation. Good God! that ever Men should use this as a Reason to justifie themselves, in deserting the Church of *England*, viz. that she uses the *Lord's Prayer* which *Christ* taught his *Disciples*, and Enjoyned them to use, commanding them when they *Pray, to say Our Father, &c.* Whither will not prejudice carry men? But no wonder that they are above using the *Lord's Prayer* as a Form, who seldom or never read the Holy Scriptures in their Publick Assemblies. What can you say to such an Omission?

*Diff.* I say, there's no truth in what you Accuse us of. (b)

*Ch.* I hope it's no unfair way of Judging, what is the constant practice of your Teachers in their respective Assemblies, by their Practice at those Lectures where the most eminent of your Teachers are commonly present. Now I desire you to tell me how often you have heard a Chapter read at *Salters-Hall*, at the Lecture held there { I think ) every *Tuesday*. It's their constant practice, { unless its alter'd within this Ten Years ) to begin with

---

(a) Matt. 6. 6. (b) Lay-Nonconformity Justified. p. 26.

Singing

Singing a Psalm, after which the Person that Officiates Prays and Preaches, &c. I dont remember that ever I heard Mr. Williams, Mr. Calamy, Mr. Tonge, or Mr. Shower, read a Chapter at that Lecture.

If the *Meeting-Houses* in London were divided into Three Parts, not above one in the three ever reads a Chapter as a part of their Publick Service in the Mornings; and in the Afternoons I believe that not one in Six throughout the City ever reads a Chapter out of the Holy Scriptures of the Old or New Testament. In those *Meeting Houses* where the Scriptures are read, you have seldom more than one Chapter. Don't you think that in this particular the Order of our Service is much preferable to yours? we have two Lessons read, one out of the *Old Testament*, and the other out of the *New*; and they are generally so Order'd, as to Shew the Harmony and consent that the one bears to the other. The Types under the Law, in reading the Gospel appear in Substance. So that those of the poorer sort (as a late excellent Author says) " who have neither Skill to read the Scriptures, nor always Leisure to attend the Reading of 'em on the Weekdays, even those have not only the Gospel preached to 'em; but moreover Moses and the Prophets read to 'em every Sabbath day. (a)

*Diff.* I find no fault with the Church of *England* for reading the *Holy Scripture*, her Practice is in this very commendable; but I cannot by any means like the Reading of the *Apocryphal Books*. These being no part of the Sacred Canon: I am afraid that Ignorant People (by thus hearing 'em read in the Church) should take 'em to be true parts of *Canonical Scripture*. You know in those Books there are many things trifling and Impertinent, and others a great deal worse.

*Ch.* I never heard of any in the Communion of our Church, who took the *Apocryphal Books* to be a part of *Canonical Scripture*: nor is there any great danger of their being led into such an Error, because the Sixth Article saith, *that they are read for Example of Life and Instruction of Manners, and that the Church doth not apply 'em to Establish any Doctrine*. These Articles are commonly Printed in our *Common Prayer Books*, and are so

---

(a) Dr. Bisse upon the Beauty of Holiness in the Common-Prayer.  
p. 61.

60 The L A Y - M A N ' s - P L E A S , &c.

Publick, that people are sufficiently guarded against such a Mistake, as you apprehend they are in danger of.

I desire you to consider, that in the Lessons appointed for the Lord's days, there are few or none taken out of the *Apocrypha* throughout the whole Year. So that if you mention this as an Argument to Justifie your Lay-Nonconformity, it is nothing at all to the purpose; because you may come to the Church almost every Lord's day in the Year, and hear no such Lessons read: As for the things you mention which are trifling and Impertinent &c. I shall wave the taking notice of 'em, having already said enough to demonstrate, that what you Object against the reading of such Lessons, is a very poor *Plea* to justifie Separation. Mr. Baxter says, if Authority Command it, and the Churches Agreement require it, the *Apocrypha* (b) may lawfully be read. And I don't find that any of the Old Nonconformists, ever encouraged Separation upon this Account. I desire you Sir, to proceed to those Objections that more nearly affect the Case of *Lay-Separation*, for this is nothing at all to the purpose.

*Diff.* I hope you'll excuse me for mentioning these Things; I was willing to know what you had to say in Vindication of the Church, because I know some honest Neighbours of mine that lay much Stress upon these Things, and always mention 'em amongst the Reasons for their Nonconformity. You may remember I told you, that the *Dissenters* way of Administring the Sacra-ments was most *Regular* and *Scriptural*. I will now pro-ceed to tell you what I dislike in your way of Administring the *Sacraments*. And first, I will begin with that of Baptism. Our Method you know is this; The Mi-nister addresses himself to the Parent or Parents in the Face of the Congregation, repeats the *Apostles Creed*, or some other Confession of Faith agreeable thereto, asks if they Believe these Articles of our Holy Religion, and desire to have their Child Baptized into this Faith. They promise to teach it the *Creed*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Ten Commandments*, and to do their utmost to bring it up in the Fear of the Lord (c). After which, the Minister having prayed for a Blessing upon the Ordinance, he Baptizes the Child in the *Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, declares it a Member of the *Visible Church*, gives God Thanks, and concludes with a Blessing. This

---

(b) *Christian Directory.* p. 901. (c) *Lay-Non.* 28.

## The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c. 61

is our Method, and such a one as no body can dislike.

*Church.* I thought I had known the *Dissenters way* of Baptizing, but I find by your Account of it, that I am almost a perfect Stranger to their Method of Administering that Ordinance. I am certain, that I have seen an Hundred Children Baptized by your Teachers, and I solemnly declare that I never heard the *Apostles Creed* made use of in that Office but once, in all the time that I was acquainted with them. I never once heard a Parent engaged to teach his Child the *Creed*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Ten Commandments*. It may be the Person you hear does this, and one or two more of your Acquaintance; but it is not the general Practice of *Dissenters*.

But allowing that the Method which you have mentioned is universally used amongst *Dissenters*, you cannot be angry with me, if I ask you in what part of the *New Testament* you read, that those who were Commissioned to Baptize, made use of such a Method. I have carefully read it over, and I don't so much as find that they Baptized in the *Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; much less that they required any Promises from those that they Baptized, or from others on their Account. So that your Method is far from being found to be Scriptural. And now according to your way of Reasoning (when you undertook to prove that the *Lord's Prayer* was not to be used as a Form) your Method of Baptizing is unwarrantable, and you ought to separate from those that have such Usages as are not to be met with in Scripture. I only mention this to convince you of the weakness of your own Arguments. And now I desire you to tell me, what there is that you dislike in the Church about Baptism, which you judge to be a sufficient Reason for Separation.

*Diff.* There are several Things in your Office for Baptism which I cannot approve of, being liable to very just  
(a) Exceptions, and such as I am not ashamed to mention among the Reasons of my *Nonconformity*.

*Church.* Pray Sir let me hear what they are, and give me the Reasons for your dislike of 'em.

*Diff.* I Object against *Godfathers* and *Godmothers* according to the Usage of the Church of *England*, because

---

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 28.

62 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

First, they are with you the only Covenanters for Children, and the Parents by the Canon must not be required so much as to be present, tho' it be upon the Account of their Faith, that their Infants have a Right to Baptism. (a)

Secondly, Some who are hardly pass'd the Age of Children, are admitted as *Sponsors*, and others act as such by Proxy, which is (I think) a playing with Sacred Things.

Thirdly, Do you think there is one in a Thousand who performs what he promised on such an Occasion, (b) or ever intended it; or that could be as good as his Word, had he ever so great a mind to it?

Fourthly, The *Questions* and *Answers* which are a part of your *Office for Baptism*, are in my Opinion very improper; and seem to imply a Necessity of an actual Profession of Faith, to be made by every one before he is Baptized; which destroys Infant Baptism. For these Reasons I dislike *Sureties* according to the Usage of the Church of England.

*Church*. Your first Argument is founded upon a Mistake, as will appear from what a late Learned *Bishop* (b) says upon this Subject. ‘It is suppos’d that the Parents do truly make those Vows in the Name of the Child, but it was also thought fit to have a farther Security, both for putting the Parents in mind of their Duty, and for seeing how it is performed; and in case that the Parents do dye, that others may be bound to see to the Education of the Child. (c) And where the *Sureties* are procured by the Parents, there they have all the Authority to Covenant in behalf of the Infant, that the Parents can give ‘em, which cannot be denied: So that you are not by any means deprived of your Right (as some falsely suggest) of dedicating your Children to God by Baptism, any more than the Jewish Parents are deprived of the Power of making their Children Debtors to the Law by Circumcision: In which Fœderal Act there was a Person who was called the Master of the Covenant, and by the Modern Jews he is called a *Surety*. And tho’ some of your Writers reckon this a Modern Innovation, yet in the Primitive Church the Use of Sureties was so early, that it is not easie to fix the time of their beginning (c);

---

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified*. p. 29. (b) *Ibid.* p. 30.

(c) *Bp. Burnet's Exposition of the Church Catechism*. p. 308.

as I have read in a Learned Author upon the Common Prayer. (a)

Your Second Objection against *Sureties*, is a very trifling one, *viz.* That some who are hardly pass'd the Age of Children themselves, are admitted as *Sureties*, and others Act as such by Proxy. Please to read the 29th Canon, and you'll find that none are to be admitted *Sureties* for Children, but such as have received the Lord's Supper, which is not (you know) administred to Children in our Church.

Tho' I am no great admirer of having that Office perform'd by Proxy, yet I know no Reason why that may not (in some Cases) as well as many other Fœderal Acts, be perform'd after such a manner.

Your Third Objection against *Sureties* is drawn from the common abuse of this Custom, which is a very unfair way of Reasoning, *viz.* That not one in a Thousand perform what they promise. You ought to consider the good design of the Church in appointing *Sureties* in Baptism, which is not to be condemned for the Faults of Men, and the looseness of the Times. The way to pass a true Judgement upon the usefulness of any Order or Custom, is to judge by the Advantages that accrue from the observing of it, where it is duly kept; and not by the disadvantages that come of its being broken. If you will use your utmost Care to have this Custom regularly observed, I doubt not but you may procure Persons to stipulate for the Christian Education of your Children, in case you should dye or Apostatize; and this I am sure you cannot dislike. That it is in the Power of *Sureties* to take care that Children be Educated in the Principles of the Christian Religion, can hardly be denied; but it is not to be suppos'd, that such *Sureties* stand engag'd, that the Children they stipulate for in Baptism, shall walk according to the Rules of their Holy Religion. They are only engaged to do what lies in their Power, to engage them to Answer their Baptismal Vow. And this leads me to your Fourth Objection against the *Questions* and *Answers* in our Office for Baptism; such as: *Dost thou Believe in God the Father Almighty, &c.* Resp. *All this I stedfastly Believe.* Quest. *Wilt thou be Baptized in this Faith?* Resp. *That is my*

(a) ορθογενετική à Just. Mart. Αραδόχες à Dionys. Areop. vocantur.  
vid. Comber.

*desire*, &c. In Answer to this Objection I will offer two or three Things.

1. Those *Questions* and their *Answers*, are a solemn Declaration of what Baptism doth oblige all Baptized Persons to; and that Infants do stand ingaged to perform the Vow of Baptism when they shall come to Years of Knowledge; and therefore (as the late Lord Bishop of Sarum says) their Answering so positively in the Name of the Child, does according to all Acts in the Name of Infants, import only, that as far as in them lies, Care shall be taken that the Infant shall make good those Engagements in due time (*a*), which the *Baptismal Vow* obliges him to.

2. All Contracts are made by mutual Promises; it is therefore reasonable, that when Children are admitted into the Christian Society by Baptism, (which is a Fœderal Act,) some Persons should in their Names promise to fulfill the Conditions of that Covenant. The Minister that officiates, is the proper Person to take this Security, and this is agreeable to what St. Augustine saith, *Since for want of Age Children cannot believe with the Heart unto Righteousness, nor confess with the Mouth unto Salvation, therefore others Answer for 'em, that the Sacrament may be administred compleatly unto them; because they cannot Answer.* (*b*) That Baptism was antiently administred by *Question* and *Answer*, is the Opinion of a Learned Author (*c*), and may be proved by a great many Authorities. That our Reformers judged Faith and Repentance necessary to Baptism, cannot be denied; so that your Opinion that such *Questions* and *Answers* seem to destroy Infant Baptism, has very little weight in it, and seems invented on purpose to bring an Odium on our Office for Baptism.

To be free with you, I don't like your way of Baptizing Infants, because you have no such *Questions* and *Answers*: Baptism is a Covenant, and the very Nature of a Covenant, supposes that two (or more) Parties are engaged to one another; now Infants who are incapable of obliging themselves by such a Covenant, have others to stipulate for 'em. But with you nothing is done in the

(*a*) Dr. Burnet concerning the Obligation of Church Communion.  
P. 100.

(*b*) Accommodat illis mater Ecclesia aliorum linguam ut stipulent, &c. Aug. in Act 2. (*c*) Mr Reeves's Apologies, &c.

## The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c. 57

Name of the Child. The Parent only engages for the Religious Education of his Child, and gives up himself to God in Covenant: Whereas the Infant is the Party concerned in this Covenant-Transaction, and what is then transacted ought to be in the Name of the Infant. The Reason given in our Church Catechism, why Infants are baptiz'd, tho' they cannot perform what is required in Baptism, viz. Faith and Repentance, is this, because they promise them both by their Sureties, which Promise when they come to Age, themselves are bound to perform.

Some of your Friends say, it's a very common Thing for the Sureties to give back the Charge, delivered to them, to the Parents. As common a thing as it is, I have never yet known it done; but if it was done more frequently than it really is, you ought not by any Means to condemn the Custom of having Sureties on that Account: For it can only be done by such as are ignorant of what they undertake. Mr. Baxter says, That Parents may agree with the Sponsors, to represent their own Persons, and speak and promise what they do, as their Deputies only, in their Names. And since it may be objected, that the Church means something else, and this is but to juggle with the World: How can you prove (says he) that the Authority, that made or imposed the Liturgy, meant any other thing? And if the Imposers had meant ill, in a Thing that may be done well, you may discharge your Conscience in doing it well (a). You have therefore no just Cause to separate from the Church on this Account.

*Diff.* If I could comply with the Usage of your Church in this Affair, there is yet another thing that sticks as much with me as Godfathers and Godmothers, viz. "The Cross in Baptism, (b) which gives me, and many Thousands in England, great Offence; and as long as I can have my Children baptized without this Addition to Christ's Ordinance, I can never consent to its being done in your Way.

*Church.* Pray, Sir, give me your Reasons, why you can never consent to have your Children baptized with the Sign of the Cross.

*Diff.* That I will do in as few Words as I can. And,

(a) Christian Directory, p. 815.

(b) Lay Non-Conformity Justified, p. 30.

192

## 58 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

1. There's not one Word of the Cross in Baptism in the whole *New Testament*, neither was it ever used in the Apostle's Time. Nor,

2. Can I find that this *Ceremony* was used in the most *Primitive*, that is, in the best Ages of the Church.

3. Suppose it was brought in, in *Tertullian's Time* (tho' this is not granted nor proved) it is certain that several other Customs, as ancient, (a) are altogether neglected by the Church of *England*; and why is this retained any more than the rest?

4. The Cross (as used in the Church of *England*) seems to be as much a Sacrament, as Men are capable of making one. Here's an outward and visible Sign, viz. *crossing*, of an inward and spiritual Grace, viz. *Faith and Christian Fortitude*: The Party baptized, being sign'd with the Sign of the Cross, in Token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, but manfully to fight under his Banner, &c. Moreover, the 30th Canon says, (b) That by this Sign the Infant is dedicated to the Service of him that died upon the Cross; so that, as far as I can perceive, here's that added to the Worship of God, which, in all other Respects, besides that of a divine Appointment, has the Nature of a Sacrament. And I cannot think any Church-Governours upon Earth have it in Commission to do this.

5. Why may not the *Priest* put his Finger into the Child's Ears, in Token that it shall hearken diligently unto the Word of God, and put Salt on his Tongue, in Token that his Speech shall be seasoned with Salt; as make an airy Cross in its Forehead, in Token that it shall confess a crucified Christ.

6. Since the Church her self acknowledges, that it doth neither add any thing to the Virtue and Perfection of Baptism; nor, being omitted, doth detract any thing from the Effect and Substance of it; I cannot see why it should be retained, considering such a Number of Christians have been offended at it, and continue to be so. These, Sir, are my Reasons against it.

*Church.* You have taken Care to mention enough, and if your Arguments had been as weighty as they are numerous, I had had a large Task upon my Hands to answer 'em. You have followed the Advice of a famous Orator, to amass all the weaker Arguments, which, tho'

---

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 31. (b) *Ibid.* p. 32.

*weak in themselves, yet by standing together, may lend a mutual Assistance to one another.* (a) You must therefore excuse me, if I say very little in answer to those Objections that don't affect the Controversie, viz. *Lay-Separation.*

I. You tell me there's not one Word of the Cross in Baptism in all the New-Testament, neither was it ever used in the *Apostles Time.*

I readily grant the first Part of the Assertion, but I cannot tell for what Reasons you so positively affirm, that it was never used in the *Apostles Time.* If you barely say we have no Account that they ever used it in any Part of the New-Testament, I reply, neither have we any Account that they baptized in the Name of the *Trinity*; the only Difference is, that they had a Command for the doing of one, and none for the other. I shall by and by mention the Practice of Antiquity in the Case before us, which will give a Light to the Controversie.

If your first Argument be allowed, viz. That we have no mention, &c. yet this does not by any means justifie your Separation. You may remember, that I told you in another Part of our Discourse, that the *Jews* added several significant Ceremonies to those which *Moses* gave them, such as the thick Sawce in their Paschal Supper, mentioned by the late learned Bishop of *Sarum* (b). The changing of the Posture in which they were commanded to eat the *Passover*, into a Table-Posture; both which were so far from being condemned, that our Saviour complied with their Custom. Now if he was so far from condemning an Addition, perfectly humane, to a divine Institution, why should you be offended with this Custom in our Church, of signing Infants with the Sign of the Cross? Again,

How many Precepts, in the *New-Testament*, concerning Ritual Matters, are superseded by the Authority of the Church! The abstaining from Blood, which is a positive Command; the having of *Deaconesses* in the Church; the *Kiss of Peace*, used in the *Apostles Time*, and mentioned in many of their *Epistles*, which had its Signification; their *Love-Feasts* before the *Encharist*; the dipping of Persons at Baptism, &c. Now since all these Ritual Matters (some of which are very significant) are laid

\* (a) Infirmiora argumenta congreganda sunt, imbecilla enim natura mutuo auxilio sustinentur, lib. V. c. 20. Quintilian.

(b) *The Obligation of Church-Communion*, p. 46.

60 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

aside by the Authority of the Church, why should her Authority be questioned, any more in annexing the Cross at Baptism, than in taking away the Custom of dipping, to which St. Paul assigns a mystical Signification, viz. *Our being buried with Christ, in Baptism, and our being raised up with him to Newness of Life*: For (as I said before) a greater Degree of Authority, is certainly necessary to take away a Practice that has the Face of a plain Authority in Scripture enjoining it, than for adding such Rites as are recommended by new Emergencies. And this is (I hope) a sufficient Answer to your first Argument.

Your Second and Third Objections against the Cross, shall be considered together. You don't find, that this Ceremony was used in the most Primitive, that is, in the best Ages of the Church: And suppose it was brought in in Tertullian's Time (tho' this, you say, is not granted nor proved) other Customs, of as long standing in the Church, are altogether neglected, &c.

Such Customs as were of Apostolical Use, are (I have told you) entirely superseded, by the Authority of the Church; and such as continued in Use to Tertullian's time, are, by general Consent, disus'd: Such was the *holy Kiss*, which was perform'd (as the best Writers generally conceive) after all other Preparations, immediately before they entred upon the Celebration of the Lord's Supper; and also at the Conclusion of the Solemnity. (a) This the Apostle is supposed to direct to, when he enjoins the *Corinthians to greet one another with a holy Kiss*. (b) And this was kept up with that Reverence in Tertullian's Time, that he speaks as if the publick Prayers were maim'd and imperfect, if it concluded not with this *Kiss*. (c). This, with many other Customs, are laid aside; and what can you prove from hence, but only that such things may be altered by the Authority of the Church, and by the same Authority others may be continued; and innocent ones introduced, when the Church thinks fit. Now since the Authority of the Church continues the Cross in Baptism, it ought to be complied with, as those other Customs were, when they were in Use.

You say it is not granted nor proved, that the Cross at Baptism was used in Tertullian's Time. A learned

(a) Dr. Cave's Prim. Chrift. Part I. Ch. XI. p. 346.

(b) 1 Cor. xvi. 20.

(c) Quæ Oratio cum divorcio sancti Osculi integra? Tertul. de Orat.

899

## The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c. 61

Author, in a most excellent Book says, " That tho'  
" we don't find the Cross in Baptism mentioned by *Justin*,  
" we are sure it was a constant Ceremony; for *Tertullian*  
" says, that the Devil signed his Soldiers in the Forehead,  
" in imitation of the Christians, *Mithra signat illic in frontibus milites suos.* Ter. de præscrip. c. 40. and St. *Austin*  
" says, *Semper enim Crucis Baptismus jungitur, The Cross and*  
" *Baptism are never parted.* (a) From hence it appears,  
that the use of the Cross is a more antient Ceremony, than  
you are willing to allow it to be.

I come now to consider your fourth (and indeed your strongest) Objection against this Ceremony, viz. That the Cross (as used in the Church of England) seems to be as much a Sacrament as Men are capable of making one, &c. To add to the Sacraments which Christ has Instituted, is certainly a most wicked Usurpation; but tho' this has been often charged upon the Church, it has never yet been proved.

There is (says a late learned Author) a difference between the signifying and expressing some part of our Duty, with such proper Acts of our Minds, as do become the Occasion, and the signifying of some blessing that is offered or conveyed to us by God, in the use of that Action. The former is far from the nature of a *Sacrament*, and indeed it is only a mute way of speaking; for Actions, as well as Words, may become instituted Signs to express our Thoughts; and when *Rites* are appointed as means only to raise in our Minds suitable and corresponding Thoughts, they are far from being used as *Sacraments*.

(b) " If it was pretended, that by the use of the Cross in  
" Baptism, a divine Virtue were conveyed to the Person  
" Baptized, that deadned him more intirely to the  
" World, and wrought him up to a greater Conformity  
" to *Christ*; then here were a new Sacrament set up,  
" which could not be justified: But when it is only meant  
" as an exhibiting the *Form* of the *Cross of Christ*, to put  
" us in mind of our Obligation to imitate Him, and to  
" suffer for Him, here is only a *Rite* that speaks to us in  
" an Action, which is explained by the words that accom-  
pany it.

Your Quotations out of the 30th, Canon, to prove that it is the Opinion of our Church, that Children are de-

---

(a) *Mr. Reeves's Apologies*, Vol. 1. p. 98.

(b) *Late Lord Bishop of Sarum in the forecited Book*. p. 90.

62 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

dicated to *Christ* by the Sign of the *Cross*; is nothing at all to the Matter in debate; for since Lay-men are not concerned in the Canons of the Church, how does any passage there justify Lay-nonconformity?

But least you should fancy, that there is more in that part of your Argument than there really is; I will briefly consider it. It is agreed on all Hands, that by Baptism we are dedicated to *Christ*. Now the Church of *England*, both in her *Rubrick* and *Canon*, affirms that the Baptism is compleat, and the Child made a Member of *Christ's Church*, before the Sign of the *Cross* is made use of. It is expressly said, *we receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, and upon that do Sign it with the *Cross*. So that the Child is declared within the Congregation of *Christ's Flock*, before the Sign of the *Cross* is applyed to it.

The word *dedicated* (then) as used in the *Canon*, does signify no more than a Sign of our *Dedication* by *Baptism*. And the whole of Christianity, being by the Apostle himself comprehended under the Term and Denomination of the *Cross*, this Sign is therefore used; being as expressive as may be, of what the Infant by Baptism is design'd to. And this is also an Answer to your sixth and last Objection; because it shews the reasonableness of continuing this Ceremony in the Church.

You ask, Why may not a *Priest* put his Fingers into the Child's Ears, in Token that it shall harken diligently unto the word of God, &c?

I Answer, because Clergy-men in our Church, do all things decently and in Order, and they have no Authority to use such ridiculous *Rites*, which cannot be pretended to be equally significant with the *Cross* at Baptism.

But can you pretend, that the apprehension of an Abuse, in the extent of Authority, can justify your quarrelling at those *Rites*, that are Lawfully commanded? Can you observe any Inclination to swell the number of 'em? give me an Instance (if you can) of any new *Rite* or *Ceremony*, that has been appointed in your time, or in the Age before you, or indeed, since the *Reformation*. If you cannot, to what purpose do you make an Outcry, that the Church may decree Twenty or a Hundred, as well as two or three? only to prejudice Men against her.

I intreat you to consider, whether there be any thing sinful in the Sign of the *Cross* in Baptism. If there is not, which I perswade my self you must own (for it is certainly

as lawful to declare by Signs, as by Words, what the Baptized Person is designed to) Then how can you think of parting from the Church, for such a Ceremony? If the Minister of your Parish would not Baptize your Child without it, you ought in duty to have attended upon him, in order to have had your Doubts and Scruples answered; and if he had not given you satisfaction, you should have applied your self to another Divine of the Church of *England*, and used the best means for your Information. If your Conscience be truly tender of sinning, methinks you should be as much afraid of the Sin of *Schism*, as of any other Sin, and therefore you should use the best means you can to inform your Judgment aright, that you may not condemn things as Unlawful, which may Lawfully be used, and on that Account break the Communion of the Church.

*Diff.* If you please, I would willingly talk with you a little about the *Lord's Supper*; for I have some things to object against the usage of your Church, in the Administration of that Sacrament.

*Church.* If you find any fault with that, I am sure it must be without Cause; for I am well assured, that the Lord's Supper is administered after a much more regular manner in the Church of *England*, than ever I saw it administered in any of your *Assemblies*. Give me leave only to mention some particular things, which (in my Opinion) are not very decent in your way of administering that Ordinance. Your manner of Consecrating the Elements, is what I cannot approve of. At a very large *Meeting-Place* in Town, I saw a quantity of Wine set upon the Table, I suppose about a Gallon. This was Consecrated, but the Teacher only took one of the Vessels into his Hand, the remaining part of the Wine was in a Barrel in the *Vestry*. When the Wine upon the Table was all spent, two Persons fetch'd more out of the Vestry; and I don't remember that any Prayer of Consecration was used after the first; nor indeed, could any such thing be done without the utmost Confusion; because two grave old Men were all the while carrying the Wine to the Communicants, who were about 6 or 7 Hundred Seated in the Body of the *Meeting-House*.

I cannot be reconciled to your Method of having Lay-men carry the Elements from one Pew to another, and the Person that sits next to the Door to reach the *Bread* and *Wine* to their next Neighbour. It seems more grave and

and solemn, to have that performed by the Minister, saying to every such Communicant as our Church directs.

Your Sitting at the Sacrament is very offensive to me, and does not look so Reverent as the Posture of Kneeling.

*Diff.* I cannot be of your Mind. I take Sitting to be the most agreeable Posture, and I desire you'd hear my Reasons for my Opinion.

1. When the Sacrament was first Instituted, Christ and his *Apostles* did not Kneel, but *Sate* in a leaning Posture, which was the Table Gesture at that time, in that Country.

2. I don't find, that the *Primitive Christians* received the Sacrament in the Posture used by the Church of *England*. (a) *Tertullian* says, that on the *Lord's Day* (when all agree the Sacrament was usually celebrated) they accounted it a Sin to Worship Kneeling; and a great Divine of the Church calls it a *Novel custom. Protest. Reconciler. p. 294.*

3. Kneeling at the Sacrament, is thought by many great Men, to be of no longer date than the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*: I don't find, (b) that the People which came to the Communion were obliged to set themselves in the Gesture of those which Adore, until that in the 13th, Century, the Adoration of the Sacrament was established in the *Latin Church*. This is the Opinion of *Monsieur L'Arroque* in his History of the Eucharist. p. 717.

Tho' the Church of *England* has declar'd against Adoring the Elements in the Sacrament, yet I fear your posture of receiving, may harden Ignorant Papists in their Idolatry, and lead weak Protestants into an Error, which would be of dangerous Consequence to them. But after all, if we could not possibly receive the Lord's Supper in any other Posture, most of us should rather do it in yours, than live in the total neglect of so Comfortable and Important a Duty.

*Church.* I find then, you do not imagine that there is any thing sinful in this Posture, nor any thing so indecent but that you can comply with it. After such a Concession, I have no great Occasion to answer your Arguments, because they are very improperly applied to justify Lay-non-conformity; for if you can lawfully use that Posture (supposing that you must use that, or die in the neglect of the Ordinance) you ought to have a greater regard to the *Peace and Unity* of the Church, than to break it upon

---

(a) *Lay-Non-Conformity Justified. p. 33.* (b) *Ibid. p. 34.* such

## The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c. &c. 65

such slight Reasons. But to proceed to the Answering of your Arguments, by which you justifie your self in Sitting at the Sacrament.

I. You say, when the Sacrament was first Instituted, Christ and his *Apostles* did not Kneel, &c. To this I Answer, That it can never be so clearly prov'd, as that the *Conscience* may surely build upon it, what Gesture Christ and his *Apostles* used at the Celebration of the Sacrament. All that can be gather'd from Scripture, amounts to no more than this, That as they were Eating, or as they did Eat, as the Phrase is render'd in St. Mark, Jesus took Bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples (a). And he took the Cup, (b) (when he had Supped, saith St. Paul (c); after Supper, as St. Luke (d) hath it) and gave Thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. It is very plain from this Account, That our Lord did Institute, and Administer the Sacrament to his *Disciples*, and that they did receive it; but in what Posture they receiv'd it, whether Leaning, Sitting, or Kneeling, cannot be so easily determin'd from any account that we have of the Institution. They used that Gesture at Supper, that was in Use in the Country; but all the stress of the Argument to prove that they receiv'd the Lord's Supper in the same Posture, is only founded upon a meer probability, that they did not alter the Gesture that was us'd at the *Passover*: Since then you have not any certain account what Posture was us'd by our *Saviour* at the Institution of the Sacrament; Is it not very unreasonable, that you should be so much concern'd for Sitting, as to break the *Unity* of the Church, upon a bare probability that our Lord sat? Besides,

If it is allow'd that our *Saviour* Instituted, and that the *Apostles* receiv'd this Sacrament in a Table-Gesture, which was much like to our lying or sitting upon *Couches*; since you lay so much stress upon Conformity to that Posture, you ought in Reason to conform to all the other Circumstances in that Institution; such as that of Receiving it after Supper, and in an Upper-room. And why you admit any Women to partake of it, after you lay so much stress upon the using of one particular Gesture, which is not determin'd in Scripture, is not easi-

(a) Matt. 26. 26.

(b) Mark 14. 22.

(c) 1 Cor. 11. 25.

(d) Luke 22. 29.

66 The L A Y - M A N ' S - P L E A S , &c.

ly to be accounted for ; because none of that Sex were admitted at the first Institution of that Sacrament. For my part, I cannot see why these Circumstances, with others that may be mention'd, are not as tenaciously to be held, as the Posture of Sitting ; since they are more particularly mention'd, than the Posture in which that Ordinance was first administred. Mr. Baxter says, " Since that Rubrick is inserted which disclaimeth both all Bread-worship, and the Bodily real Presence, my Judgment is for Kneeling. God having made some Gesture necessary, and confin'd us to none, but left it to Humane determination ; I shall submit it to Magistrates in their proper Work. I am not sure that Christ intended the Example of himself in this, as Obligatory ; but I am sure he hath commanded me Obedience and Peace. The Nature of the Ordinance ( says the same Author ) is mixed ; and if it be lawful to take a Pardon from the King upon our Knees, I know not what can make it unlawful, to take a seal'd Pardon from Christ by his Ambassador upon our Knees." (a)

You say in the Second Place, That you don't find that the Primitive Christians receiv'd the Sacrament in the Posture used by the Church of England, that is, Kneeling ; which you affirm to be of no longer Date than the Doctrine of Transubstantiation : and that they who came to the Communion, were not oblig'd to set themselves in the Posture of those that Adore, 'till the 13th Century. In Answer to your Second and Third Arguments, I will dare to affirm in the First Place, That you don't find that the Primitive Christians ever receiv'd the Lord's Supper in the Posture now us'd by the Presbyterians in England. The practice of the Ancients is so far from countenancing, that it effectually condemns your Practice. In Tertullian's time they pray'd standing upon the Lord's Day, and all the time between Easter and Whitsuntide : But on their other Days for Prayer, they alter'd their Posture, and pray'd Kneeling : So that you must either prove that they never receiv'd the Sacrament on their Prayer-Days, or you must allow, that sometimes they receiv'd it Kneeling. But suppose that they always received it Standing, (and I challenge you to prove that they ever receiv'd it Sitting,) they receiv'd it in a praying Posture ; so that their Practice very much countenances

(a) Five Disputations, &c. p. 411. Defence, p. 177.

the Practice of receiving it Kneeling, which is our Praying Posture.

Your great Men, such as *Gillespy, Prynne, &c.* who affirm, That Kneeling is of no longer Date than the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, only give us their bare Words for it. The Pope, who first establish'd this Doctrine, was *Innocent the Third*, about the Year 1219; and his Successor *Honorius* was the Man who decreed Adoration to the *Host*, about the Year 1217. The first Council which approv'd of the Papal Decree for *Transubstantiation*, was that assembled at *Constance* A.D. 1415. Now, if it can be prov'd that they us'd an Adoring Posture at the Sacrament, before the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* was known in the World, you are much to be blam'd for affirming the contrary so positively. In order to prove this, It is plain from *Tertullian's Apologetick for the Christians*, as translated by the Learned Mr. *Reeves*, that the Primitive Christians receiv'd the Holy Sacrament Praying. They pray'd for the Universal Peace and Welfare of the Church, for the Tranquillity and Quietness of the World, for their *Emperors*, and all in Authority, &c. But what is still more considerable, the Minister us'd a Prayer at the delivery of the Sacrament to each Communicant, (as the Learned Dr. *Cave* says in his *Primitive Christianity*, (a)) to which everyone at their receiving said, *Amen*; which may encline us to think that they were in a Praying Posture. That this was not Sitting is easily prov'd; for that Posture at Prayer is severally condemn'd by *Tertullian* and others. *Tertullian* says, That it is an Irreverence, which the very Heathens, if they did perceive well, and understand what we did, would take Notice of. St. *Cyril*, (who wrote a long time before the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*) speaking of the Holy Sacrament says, *Let them who receive it, come near Bowing themselves in the Posture of Worship and Adoration.* (b) *Theodoret* who flourish'd above 800 Years before the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, in a Dialogue between an Orthodox Christian and an Heretick, introduces the former thus Discoursing concerning the Lord's Supper: "The Mysterious Symbols or Signs in the "Sacrament, (viz. Bread and Wine) depart not from

(a) *Primitive Christianity*, ch. 11. p. 347. (b) St. *Cyril Hierosol. Mystag. Catech. 5. versus finem. Paris Edit. p. 244.*

" their proper Nature ; for they abide in their former Eſſence, and retain their former Shape and Form, and approve themselves both to our Sight and Touch, to be what they were before : But they are consider'd for such as they are made, (that is with respect to their Spiritual Signification, and that Divine Use to which they were Conſecrated) and are Believ'd and Ador'd, as thoſe very Things which they are believ'd to be." (a) These Paſſages are ſufficient to my preſent Purpose, viz.: to prove that the Poſtures uſ'd by the Primitive Christians, were Poſtures of Worſhip and Adoration : And therefore that the Poſture uſ'd by the Church of *England* is much more agreeable to *Antiquity*, than that which is uſ'd by you ; for Sitting was never reckon'd by the Primitive Christians a fit Poſture for Adoration. But,

Because ſome of your Leaders have been ſo very kind, as to tell the World that Kneeling at the Sacraſment is *Popiſh* and *Antichriſtian*, I'll in a few Words Anſwer that Objection. A Learned (b) Writer of ours affirms, That Kneeling in the Act of receiving, was never an inſtituted Cerimony in the Church of *Rome*. Tho' they were oblig'd to bow themſelves reverently at the Adoration of the *Host*; yet, in the Act of receiving, *Kneeling* is not required, as maniſtely appears by the *Pope's* manner of Receiving, which is not Kneeling; but either Sitting, as it was in *Bonaventure's* time; or after the Fashion of Sitting, or a little leaning upon his Throne, as he doth at this Day. So that our *Difſenting Brethren*, who are ſo very much afraid of ſymbolizing with the Church of *Rome*, are at laſt found to oppoſe the Church of *England*, in a Cerimony far from being *Popiſh* or *Idolatrous*; and to Conform to the Practice of the *Pope* in Sitting at the Sacraſment. And this ſhews at once the weakness of your Fourth Argument, That you fear this Poſture may harden Ignorant *Papiſts* in their *Idolatry*. How can it be ſuppoſ'd that it ſhould have ſuch an Effect, when there is no Elevation of the *Host* in the Church of *England*, and ſhe declares expreſly againſt any Adoration of the Elements; especially, when you add to this, (what hath been already obſerv'd), that the *Papiſts* do not ſtrictly enjoyn *Kneeling*, in the act of Receiving? I never heard of any in our Communion that were led into ſuch an Error, as you ſeem to be afraid of

(a) Dialog. 2 Tom. 4. p. 85. as quoted in the *London Cases*. (b) Dr. Stillingfleet's unreaſonableness of Separation, p. 15.

their being led into, by our Posture of Kneeling. So that this is certainly one of the weakest Objections that was ever thought of, against the Usage of our Church in this particular.

And indeed the other Arguments used against Kneeling at the Sacrament, (*viz.* that Sitting is more agreeable to the Nature of a *Feast*, being our Table (*a*) Posture, and expresseth best that Familiarity our *Lord* admits his People to on this Occasion;) fall much short of proving the inexpediency of that Gesture, which is used in the Church of *England*. Please to consider that the *Passover* was called a *Feast* by God himself who Instituted it, and yet he commanded the Children of *Israel* to Celebrate it in *Egypt* after this manner; *viz.* with their *Loins Girt*, their *Shoes on their Feet*, and their *Staff in their Hands*: All Signs of Haste indeed, but no *Feast* or Table Gestures, either among the *Jews* or the *Egyptians*. Nor indeed is there any thing, except barely the Sitting in your Assemblies, that is agreeable to the nature of a *Feast*, because the Communicants are seated in their Pews, which is hardly like a *Feast*, there being no Table near to 'em.

The Command that was given to the *Jews* to eat the *Passover* as is abovementioned, seems to be perpetually Obligatory; for we have not the least intimation to the contrary. And yet when the *Israelites* were settled in the Land of *Canaan*, at rest (as the Learned *Bishop* of *Sarum* says) this change of their Circumstances did, from the natural suitableness of things, bring on a Change in this part of that Festivity: They sate about their Tables, or rather Leaned, and so they did eat the Lamb in that Lazy Posture, that expressed the rest which God had given them. And we are sure that in this they committed no Error, since our Saviour himself justified their Practice by Conforming to it. — Now if we will apply this (says the same Learned Author) to the *Christian Passover*; *Christ* being in a State of Humiliation, and in the Form of a Servant, Institutes it; and does it in a familiar posture of Equality with his *Disciples* at Table, but gives no Rule how, as to that particular, it ought to be observed for the future; as *Moses* had done. Afterwards a vast Change happens in his visible Condition, he is Raised from the Dead, and Exalted up into

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 34.

Heaven: Upon this Change therefore with Relation to his Humane Nature, which was vastly more Important, than that which had happened to the Jews, when they were brought into the Land of Promise; it seems to have been highly Congruous to that Practice of the Jews, with which the first Christians could not be unacquainted, for them to have changed the Posture, from the Appearance of Familiarity, to that of Respect: And to have brought it to the Posture which they use in Prayer and their other Devotions. (a) And with this Excellent Argument (which is sufficient to prove the Reasonableness of Kneeling at the Sacrament, to any unprejudiced Person) I conclude this part of our Conference. If you have any other Objections against the Church, I desire you'll let me hear 'em.

*Diff.* " Yes, I chuse to joyn with the *Dissenters*, because, I find there is more care taken to maintain purity in their Communions, (b) than I could ever yet see in the Church of *England*. And indeed as the Case now stands, if the *Clergy* were ever so willing to maintain greater Purity in their Communions, I don't see that they have a sufficient Power in their Hands to do it. " They can do little more than Advertise Offenders, (c) and if a *Curate* will pretend to deny 'em the Sacrament, they may prosecute him for so doing, especially if they do but say they Repent, tho' they give no manner of Evidence of their being in Earnest.

*Ch.* I am afraid this Objection proves nothing when it comes to be Examined, but Uncharitableness in those that make it. Unless you can prove that *Christ* refuses to hold Communion with our Church, in the Use of those Ordinances which he has appointed, you ought not, according to the Principles of the Old *Nonconformists*, to refuse to hold Communion with her. " Men must not separate from a Church (says Mr. *Burroughs*) tho' there be Corruptions in it, to gather into a New Church, which may be more pure, and in some respects more Comfortable; because we never find the Saints in Scripture, Separating, or raising Churches, in such a Case. And secondly, there would be no continuance in Church-Fellowship, if this were admitted; for what Church is so pure, and hath all things

---

(a) *Irenic.* c. 23. p. 163. (b) *Lay Nonconf.* p. 34, 35. (c) *Ibid.* p. 36.

## The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c. 75

" so Comfortable, but within a while another Church  
 " will be more pure, and some things will be more  
 " Comfortable there? And he concludes with this pru-  
 dent Maxim, " The general *Peace* of the Church  
 " should be more regarded, than some comfortable Ac-  
 " commodations to our selves. I hope you're not so un-  
 charitable, as to believe that we have any Abuses in this  
 Ordinance, equal to those in the Church of *Corinth*.

And yet the *Apostle* doth not perswade the Godly party  
 to separate, much less to gather a Church out of a  
 Church. In the Church of *Corinth* the Members were  
 grown very bad and scandalous; at the very time of  
 receiving the Lord's Supper, one was hungry, and another  
 was drunken; (a) and yet the *Apostle* does not command  
 'em to forsake the Communion of that Church, where  
 these scandalous Enormities were committed. He char-  
 ges every Man to Examine himself, (and not another)  
 (b) before he presumes to Eat of that Bread, and Drink  
 of that Cup. Which Words plainly set forth the Duty  
 of private Christians, who are not entrusted with a pow-  
 er Judicially to correct Vice, viz. not to abstain from  
 the Sacrament, or to separate from the Church that has  
 such Enormities; but by Preparation and Examination of  
 themselves, to take care that they be not of the Number  
 of Unworthy Receivers.

I hope you are so Charitable as to believe, that there  
 are a great Number of Good Christians in the Church  
 of *England*: And generally speaking they that receive  
 the Sacrament there, seem to have as great a Sense of  
 what they are about, as any of our *Dissenting Bre-*  
*thren*. Our Church has given the Minister a Power of  
 rejecting those that are guilty of any known and scan-  
 dalous Sin, and they are not liable to such Hardships  
 in performing that part of their Duty, as you insinuate.  
 Every *Bishop* is Judge in his own Court, and if a *Minis-*  
*ter* gives sufficient Reasons to his *Diocesan* for such re-  
 fusal, I doubt not but the *Bishop* will engage that he shall  
 be no sufferer, for Conscientiously discharging his Duty.

The *Lord Bishop* of *Sarum* advises his *Clergy* to require  
 from the People, the Observation of the first *Rubrick* in  
 the Communion Office, that such of 'em as intend to  
 receive, should send in their Names beforehand, that if  
 there be need for it, they may Advise and Assist any of

(a) 1 Cor. 11. 21. (b) ver. 28.

those

72 The LAY-MAN'S PLEAS, &c.

those that are fit to be Admitted, and reject those that are not. And if his Clergy see occasion to reject any, I doubt not but his Lordship will Countenance them with his Authority. (a)

We complain, 'tis true, of the want of a *Godly Discipline*, and I am afraid our woful Divisions almost render it impracticable. It's too Notorious to escape any Mans Observation, that a great many of our *Dissenters*, are Persons that have left the Church, on the Account of some dislike to their Parish Minister, very often occasion'd by some Dispute about *Tythes, Offerings, &c.*

Now it is very likely, since Men have such very wild Notions of Church Communion, and are so insensible of the Obligations they are under to promote Unity and Peace, as to break it upon such very trifling Reasons, and cut off themselves from the Communion of the Church, which, according to true *Discipline*, would be reckoned a most severe Punishment; they will not at all value their being rejected from the Lord's Supper, because they can joyn themselves to separate Assemblies.

So that to deal plainly with you, by encouraging Separation, you render *Discipline* impracticable. You teach Men not to value Excommunication, and affirm that they may break the Communion of the Church of *England*, without contracting any manner of Guilt, and then complain that we have not the Godly *Discipline*, which you judge necessary, to preserve purity in our Communion, for want of which you Affirm you may safely leave us. This puts me in mind of the Fable of the Pond, that grudged at the Banks and Damm, and thought it injurious to be restrained from its Liberty, and therefore combined with the Winds to raise a Tempest, and then assaulted and beat down the Banks in their Rage: After which, there was a loud complaint, that there was not, as formerly, a peaceful Association of Waters. Unless you have better Reasons (with relation to the Lord's Supper) for your Separation, it's very unwarrantable.

*Diff.* " Don't you think it's for the Honour of the Church, to be kept as pure as possible, and not left to be a Sink of all sorts of Sin and Wickedness? (b)

*Ch.* Yes certainly, and I really think (making allowances for numbers) that we have as many good Chri-

---

(a) *Visitation Charge.* p. 18.

(b) *Lay-NonConformity Justified.* p. 37.

## The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c. 65

stians in the Church, as you have in your separate Assemblies. But it ought always to be remembred, that there are loose and scandalous Persons, Men of no Religion, who call themselves Church-men, only because it is Established. And if *Presbytery* were Established, they would declare themselves of that Party, only because they will be of the strongest side. Many instances might be given of Persons notoriously Impious, that were eminent *Professors* in the last Age. I intreat you, Sir, to have a care of being so uncharitable, as to insinuate that the Church is a Sink of all sorts of Sin and Wickedness, because that is a Crime of as heinous a nature as any you can charge upon us. Suppose I should affirm, that they who are guilty of raising false Reports, of reproaching their Neighbours, especially of slandering such a venerable Body of Men, as the Clergy in the Church of *England*, ought not to be Communicated with ; especially, when not one of these Offenders is called to repentance for it ; what Answer can you make, that will not effectually refute your own Objection ? For Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath and Strife, are as certainly the Works of the Fleish, as other notorious Vices are. That these are Sins too common among your Party, *I am very unwilling to Insinuate, but whether I mention it or no, it is too notorious to escape the World's Observation.* (a)

*Diff.* The Apostle observes (*1 Cor. 5. 6.*) *That a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump;* (b) and that I may the better secure my own Innocency, I chuse to joyn with a Society where there is the strictest Holiness.

*Cb.* I have had as many opportunities of making my Remarks upon the Conversation both of *Church men* and *Diffenters*, as ever you have had, and I solemnly profess, that I find as many honest good Men in the Communion of the Church of *England* (making allowances for numbers) as ever I found among the *Diffenters*. But allowing that your Societies are much purer, let us see what force there is in your Argument.

What *St. Paul* says in the Text you have cited, is a Proverbial Speech, and shews only that Sin, like Leaven, is of a very spreading and diffusive Nature, not that it actually defiles where it is not admitted. Whereas you seem falsely to Insinuate, that by communicating with

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 19. (b) *Ibid.* p. 37.

## 66 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

wicked Men, we become partakers in their Sins; which, if true, I don't see how a Man can safely communicate with any Christian Society upon Earth. I shall be glad to know a Reason, why the Holy Ordinance of God, and the Presence of good Men at 'em, may not have as much Vertue and Efficacy, to purge and sanctify the whole Body, as the impurities of the Bad have to Stain and Pollute it; especially considering that the Sins of the Wicked shall never be imputed to the Righteous, but the Prayers of the Righteous have obtained Pardon for the Wicked. *Hezekiah prayed for the People who had not cleansed themselves, and yet did eat the Passover, and the Lord hearkned to Hezekiah, and healed the People.* You have his Prayer he made use of on this Occasion, 2 Chron. c. 30. ver. 18. 19.

"Proud Man, says Mr. Baxter, will not grow in the same Field or Church where Tares do grow, but will transplant themselves, because God will not pluck up the Tares; especially, if any Ministerial neglect of Discipline be conjoyned; and instead of blaming their own Pride, lay the blame on the Corruptions of the Church.—The Pharisees Liturgy is frequent in separate Assemblies, *God I thank thee, I am not as other Men.*

"Consider this (says he) it is the Judgment of some, that Thousands are gone to Hell, and Ten Thousands on their March thither, that in all probability had never come there, if they had not been tempted from the Parish Churches, for enjoyment of Communion in a purer Church. (a) To this I'll only add, that you have no warrant from the word of God, to separate from a Church that has impure, or (if you please) rotten Members in her Communion. This is plain, from the representation Christ hath made of his Church in the Gospel, comparing it to a Field where Wheat and Tares grow together, to a Marriage Feast where are Wise and Foolish Virgins, where some had Oyl, and others only empty Lamps, intimating that there would be a mixture of good and bad; and he gives no warrant to the good to separate themselves from the unholy. So that your Plea for Separation, viz. To secure your own Innocency, is a very groundless one. The late learned Bishop of Sarum writing upon this Head, says, "St. Paul finds great fault with

---

(a) Epistle to separate Congregations.

"many

" many Errors, some bad practices, and scandals amongst the *Corinthians*; yet tho' in one Case he thunders a severe Sentence upon a more eminently scandalous Man, he never so much as insinuates, that the rest of the Body should separate themselves from those Erroneous or Irregular Men; on the contrary, he presses the Obligations to *Unity* most vehemently on the *Corinthians*, tho' this was the Church, which he charged the most severely of all others, both with Errors, Disorders in Worship, and Scandalous Practices. (a)

There are ('tis true) many other Objections made against mixt Communions; but what has been said in answer to those you have already made, is a sufficient answer to any others that I have yet met with; and will, I hope (when you come to think seriously upon the Matter) be sufficient to convince you, that your Pleas for Separation, drawn from this Topick, are very weak ones.

*Diff.* I have but very little time more to stay with you; I promise you, I'll think on what you have said when I have an opportunity; but before I leave you, pray tell me what you have to say in Vindication of the People's reciting the *Psalms*, and *Hymns*, and some Petitions in the Prayers by turns with the Minister. I can't approve of it, their speaking so loud being to me very discomposing. (b)

*Ch.* You seem disposed to find fault, when you have no occasion: it's probable, if the Church had decreed that the *Laiy* should not with an audible Voice bear a part in the publick Worship of God, you wou'd then have complained of being deprived of your *Liberty*, and have brought instances out of the Scriptures (which you may easily do) to prove that the People had such a Liberty. But to proceed in answer to your Objection. You ought to consider what Advantages there are in this Management of our Publick Service, the use of the Tongue tends to the awakning of the Mind, and (c) Mr. *Baxter* says, it was the decay of zeal in the People that first shut out the *Responses*. The Primitive Christians were so full of Zeal and Love to *Christ*, that they would have thought it an unreasonable restraint, not to have had the Liberty to bear a part in the Prayers and Praises of the *Church*. You still allow the People to bear an equal part in singing the

(a) Concerning the Obligation of Church Communion. p. 103.

(b) Lay-Nonconformity Justified. p. 39.

(c) Mr. *Baxter's Christian Directory*. p. 856.

*Psalms*, which contain both Prayers and Praises; now if they may do this in Psalms in Metre, it requires a very penetrating Judgment, to shew why they may not do it in Prose; since saying and singing are only different Modes of utterance. Instead of finding fault with this Usage of the Church, I beseech you to follow the Advise of the forecited Author, to labour to restore the Life and Spirit to the Words, that they may be again used in a serious and holy manner, as heretofore. It is (says the same Author) a Command, *Let all the People Praise thee, O God*, and he that will limit this to single Persons, or say that it must not be vocally in the Church; or, it must be in Metre only, and never in Prose, must prove it, lest he be proved one, that addeth to God's Word.

Your bare saying, that such Responses are very discomposing, is a very poor Plea for Separation.

*Diff.* The Bowing towards the *East*, and at the Mention of the Name of *Jesus*, when there is no such Reverence paid at the Name of *God*, *Jehovah*, &c. which to be sure are equally Venerable; I will not say is *Superstitious*, but it's what I could never see accounted for.

*Ch.* It's a Sign your Cause is very weak, since it stands in need of such slender Supports. If you have a mind, you may Express your Reverence to the Name of *God*, *Jehovah*, &c. by some proper outward Gesture, and I believe no Body will be offended at it. Why then do you urge this as a Reason for Separation?

That Custom which you are offended with, is very Antient. The Primitive Christians (says a Learned Author in a late Excellent Book) turned to the Altar or *East*, not only at the Confessions of Faith, but in all the Publick Prayers. And therefore *Epiphanius* speaking of the Madness of the Impostor *Elzæus*, counts this as one Instance of it among other things, that he forbade Praying towards the *East*. (a)

As for the Bowing at the Name of *Jesus*, the Church speaks thus concerning it in her 18th Canon, *That when in time of Divine Service the Lord Jesus shall be mentioned, due and lowly Reverence shall be done by all Persons, as hath been accustomed, testifying by this outward Ceremony and Gesture, their due acknowledgement, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and only Son of God, is the only Saviour of the World, in whom alone all the Mercies, Graces, and*

---

(a) *Beauty of Holiness in the Common-Prayer by Dr. Bisse. p. 144 Promises*

## The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c. 69

Promises of God to Mankind, for this Life and the Life to come, are fully and wholly comprised. This Custom seems to be very useful against the *Arians*, and other Enemies of our Lord's Divinity, and therefore never more strictly to be kept up, than in these Days, wherein those Enemies abound.

*Diff.* " I don't like your Sitting while the *Epistles* are read, and standing at the *Gospels*; it looks as if you thought one part of Scripture was worthy of more respect than Another, which is a mistaken Notion. (a)

*Ch.* And if it was a Mistake, is this a Reason for Separation? We are sure it was a very Antient Usage in the *Catholick Church*, both throughout the *East* and *West*, and our Church continues the Practice on the same Account, as Expressing an Extraordinary Reverence to our *Lord's* own Words. A Reverential Custom, says the forecited Author, surely very meet to be kept up ev'ry where, in Honour to the Son of God, but especially in this *Church* and *Nation*, since no less is paid to our King himself, at the reading of whose Commissions the highest Court among us, even of our *Nobles*, stand up and uncover the Head. (b) The Epistles are the Words of the Servants, and at the reading of 'em they were antiently indulg'd in the Posture of Sitting; but they stood up at the reading of the Gospel, as being the Word of the Master. St. *Basil* says, *Legitur Evangelium Stantibus omnibus cum timore & Reverentia*. I hope this will satisfie you as an Answer to this Objection, which indeed affects the Controversie very little.

*Diff.* " The Instrumental Musick which is us'd in many Places, and the extraordinary Pomp of your *Cathedral Devotion*, does not seem suited to the Simplicity of the Gospel; and therefore I don't approve of it. (c)

*Ch.* Unless you have Organs in your Parish Church, this Objection is nothing at all to the purpose: And if you have, I will be much oblig'd to you, if you'll furnish me with a good Argument to prove, that a Tune upon the Organs is not lawful, or so agreeable to the Simplicity of the Gospel, as Vocal Musick is. Organs, and other Musical Instruments, are helps to raise the Spirits in the Praises of God, and may be used for that end; as

---

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified*. p. 39.

(b) *Beauty of Holiness in the Common-Pray*. by Dr. *Bisse*. p. 144.

(c) *Lay-Non-Conformity Justified*. p. 39.

70 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

good Singing is, without destroying the Simplicity of the Gospel. If you don't like the extraordinary Pomp of our *Cathedral* Devotion, never mention it again, I entreat you, to justifie *Lay Non-conformity*, for you must needs expose your self by doing it ; because every Man may keep to his own *Parish-Church*, where there is not that extraordinary *Pomp* which you dislike.

*Diff.* I don't like the vast number of *Holidays* which the Church has appointed ; it is an unwarrantable Entrenchment on that (*a*) time which God by his Fourth Commandment has allowed us for our own Employments.

*Ch.* The Reason of your dislike, *viz.* that the appointing so many Holidays is an Entrenchment on our time which God has allowed us by the Fourth Commandment, is a gross mistake ; because these Words in that Command, *Six Days shalt thou Labour*, are not to be understood as a perpetual Command (says the late *Bishop of Sarum*) otherwise God himself had appointed a violation of this, by all those other Days of Rest that were enjoyned the *Jews*, all which were call'd *Sabbaths*. Therefore the Importance of the Fourth Command is only this, " That when that Precept was first given, " God left Mankind free for Six Days, and only reserved a Seventh for Rest and Religion; but that did not " limit himself, nor all other Lawful Powers, from " making further Impositions for Rest and Religious " Exercises." And this is allow'd by your selves, in keeping the 5th of November an *Annual Thanksgiving-Day* for a National Deliverance.

If I should desire you to mention any Church that did not always Observe, and set apart Festival Commemorations of the Saints, you would be hard put to it to find out one. The Feast of *Easter* in Memory of our Saviour's Resurrection, may be trac'd back as far as the Apostles Days. *Polycarp* Bishop of *Smyrna*, who according to the Custom of other *Antient* Churches, celebrated *Easter-Day* on the 14th of the Moon, alledges the Authority of St. *John* for his Practice. And tho' the Controversie concerning the time of keeping this *Festival*, was carried on too far ; yet, we never find that it was so much as doubted whether *Easter* was to be

(*a*) *Lay Non-Conformity Justified*, p. 39.

(*b*) *The Obligation of Church-Communion*, p. 104.

kept or no. The *Nativity of Christ* was Religiously observ'd by the *Primitive Christians*, so was the *Pentecost* or *Whitsuntide* for the Mission of the *Holy Ghost*; they had *Annual Days* for Solemnizing the Memories of the Blessed Apostles. And Mr. *Baxter* says, "I don't scruple to keep a Day in Memory of any Eminent Servant of Christ, or Martyr, to praise God for their Doctrine, or Example, and Honour their Memorial. (a) In another place, speaking of *Holidays*, he says, "I would observe the Day rather than offend a weak Brother, much more rather than I would make any Division in the Church. (b) So that this Objection against *Holidays* ought not to be mentioned among the Reasons for your Non-conformity, unless in this Case you will have no regard to the practice of the *Primitive Christians*, which at other times you seem to have a veneration for, where you imagine it serves your turn.

*Diff.* If all the Objections I have made against the *Church* were fairly Answered, even to my own satisfaction, there is one thing remaining, that will engage me to separate from your Established *Church*, viz. The Obligation I am under to own an injured Ministry. Our Ministers (I am satisfied) are very *wrongfully* and *unjustly* kept out of the *Church*; (c) I think 'tis my duty to own and encourage them, especially since it is a farther Reformation they are pleading for, and in adhering to them, I reckon, I appear for the Cause of Christ.

*Ch.* If your Argument proves any thing at all, it proves more than you intend or can allow of, viz. That any Persons, of whatever perswasion, are obliged to continue in the Separation they are engaged in, and are engaged to adhere to their Teachers; because they are kept out of the *Church*. You have certainly obliged the *Non-jurors* very highly, and press'd a duty on 'em to appear for, and stand by (what they call) an injured Ministry. This specious pretence might have passed at the Restoration, when the *Usurpers* were obliged to quit their Preferments, to make room for the right Owners, and were deprived of a Maintenance; but I can see no Reason why it should be urged now, because your present set of Teachers were not designed for the Service of the *Church*, but Educated and Ordained to keep up the *Schism*, and cannot be pro-

---

(a) *Five Disputations.* p. 412. (b) *Christian Directory,* p. 885.  
(c) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 39. 40.

perly said to be *wronged* or *injured*, because they are not deprived of any Priviledge that they ever had, or hindred of enjoying any Advantages that, as *Dissenters*, they were bred up in expectation of. If they think they have any Injury done to 'em, because the Government does not admit 'em to have a share in the Revenues of the Church, we know what we are to expect from 'em. After all the fine Speeches they have made, as grateful acknowledgements for the Indulgence allowed to them, and declared themselves very well satisfied with their *Liberty*; *they are wrongfully and unjustly kept out of the Church*; whether this is not charging the Government with dealing injuriously with 'em, let any unprejudiced Person determine.

*Ministerial Conformity* is not properly the Thing in Dispute with us, therefore I will not take any Notice of the common Objections that are made against it. I have already said enough to prove that those you call Ministers are no Ministers, and therefore you cannot be under any Obligation to encourage and stand by 'em. But since you here revive that part of the Controversie, I will offer a few Things against your present Argument.

1. I affirm that *Christ* is the Head of that Society which is call'd his *Church*.

2. Therefore every Person Ministering in the several Offices appointed by him in that Society, must Minister in Subordination to him, as his Substitute, and in his Name, (*i. e.*) he ought to be Commission'd by the *Supreme Head* and *Governour* to do so.

3. The Persons who were Commission'd by *Christ*, were the *Apostles*, &c. to whom he gave Power to appoint others to succeed 'em; and after his Ascension they exerted this Power, and *Ordained Elders in every City*, *Acts 14. 23.*

4. They who were Ordained by the *Apostles*, had also a Power to Ordain others, *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest— Ordain Elders in every City*. And,

5. The Persons who were entrusted with the Power of Ordaining others, were *Bishops*, and not meer *Presbyters*; as is evident from the Writings of the most Antient Fathers, who succeeded the *Apostles*, and could not be ignorant of the Practice of the Church in the *Apostolick Age*: And also from the Writings of those in after Ages, who speak as low and moderate of *Episcopacy* as could be

be ; for Proof of this I refer you to what I have already said. The promiscuous Use of the Names in the *New Testament*, does no more prove the Order and Office to be the same, than the use of the Word *Imperator* in *Roman Histories*, proves that the *Emperors of Rome* were only *Generals of Armies*, and every *General* was an *Emperor*, because the Word is indifferently us'd for either.

6. Therefore the Persons you call true Ministers of Christ, since they are not Ordained by those who have the power to call and send Ministers into the Lord's Vineyard, are no true Ministers, as appears by the 5th Proposition.

7. To joyn with those who are not commissioned by Christ (i. e.) by the power he left in His Church, is in some measure to countenance their Usurpation, as appears from the 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>d</sup>, Propositions. Therefore,

*Lastly*, Your encouraging and standing by such Persons, cannot be called an appearing for Christ ; but is in plain Terms, an appearing against him, because you appear for such as Act in Opposition to that Authority which Christ gave to His Church.

If this is not a satisfactory Answer to your Objection, I intreat you to read Dr. Well's *Theses* against Mr. Pierce, where it is clearly proved that *Presbyters* at the *Reformation* (and from them you derive your Orders) were not invested with the Power of Ordaining other *Presbyters*.

To this I'll only add, That if *Presbyterian* Ordination is valid (which I could never yet see proved) many of our *Dissenting Brethren* Countenance and Encourage such Persons as have no Mission at all, according to their own Principles ; I mean your *Candidates*, who are allowed to Preach, to give proof of their Abilities. You know that several of the largest *Meeting-Houses* in *London* are often supplied one part of the *Lord's Day* by such *Unscriptural Officers*. And several *Dissenting Congregations* in the Country, have no other Teachers than such *Candidates* (a).

(a) A Congregation of Presbyterians, at Fishlake in Yorkshire, attended for several Years on the Preaching of Mr. Warham, a Gentleman who was Educated in the University of Cambridge, in the time of the Usurpation ; but never had either Episcopal or Presbyterian Ordination. He went constantly to the Church after he left that Place, and continued to do so till he Died; which is not above four or five Years ago.

I hope you will not pretend, that they who subscribe to support the Lectures Preached in several parts of the City by such Candidates, encourage an injured Ministry ; for according to your own Notions, they encourage those who have no Orders at all. And if the *Apostles Question* should be put to such Persons, viz. *How shall they Preach except they be sent?* they must needs answer it, after the assuming and arrogant manner of some Men, *as well as if they were sent*. If you have any other Objections against the Church of *England*, I desire you'll let me hear 'em, and I will give you all the satisfaction I am able, for I would willingly perswade you to return to that Church, from which you have so causlessly separated.

*Diff.* " I need not tell you, that your *Cathedral Devotion* is managed in a quite different manner from that of the Parish Churches ; that many of your own *Cannons* are disused, not only by the *Laity*, but by the *Clergy* too, notwithstanding the *Solemn Obligation* they are under to Act in Conformity to them ; that some of the very *Doctrinal Articles* of the Church are flatly denied, and preached against by many of your most Celebrated Ministers, after a deliberate Subscription of them (*a*) ; and that the *Episcopal Clergy* and their hearers in *North-Britain*, are Separatists from the established Church there, and yet you don't think that *Church-Unity* is broke on any of these Accounts : And why should *Dissenters*, who hold the same Articles of Faith you do, and differ from you only in the Circumstances of Religion, be thought so Criminal ?

*Ch.* Don't be angry if I tell you, that all you have said is nothing to the purpose. Our *Cathedral Devotion* is not managed exactly after the same manner as it is in *Parish Churches*. In the former they sing the *Psalms* and *Hymns*, in the latter they are read ; but the Ministers who officiate in both, have the same *Episcopal Ordination*, the Prayers they offer up to God are the same, and so are all the parts of Devotion. The Sacraments are administered after the same manner, and there is not the least Alteration to countenance your Opinion, that the *Unity* of the Church is as much broken by the different manner of managing the Publick Service, in the *Cathedral* and *Parish Churches*, as it is by your Separation, and setting up Altar against Altar (as the Antients express themselves) &c.

---

(*a*) *Lay-NonConformity Justified.* p. 43.

## The L A Y - M A N ' S - P L E A S , &c. 75

Unless you think that different Modes of Utterance, such as singing and saying, can make such a difference; if so, then a different Dress is a sufficient Argument to prove, that a Man is not the same when he wears a plain Coat, that he was when he wore an Embroider'd one.

If when you say many of our Canons are disus'd, you mean that many, both of the *Laity* and *Clergy* don't perform what by the Rules of our Church they are obliged to, they ought to be blamed for such Omissions; but I cannot see how they can be accused of breaking the *Unity* of the Church, unless it be the same thing to omit some things required by a Church, and to cast off her Authority entirely, and form other Societies in opposition to her; which no Man of Sense will ever affirm.

If you mean that some *Canons* are generally disused, That is done by the Authority of the *Church*, and so is nothing at all to your purpose.

If any of the *Clergy* of the *Church*, deny and Preach against any of the *Doctrinal Articles*, I am very sorry for it; but methinks you ought to be very cautious how you affirm such a thing. It may be what you call denying these Articles, is only explaining 'em in such a manner as is not agreeable to your Judgment; and you only imitate Dr. *Edwards* in his Modest, Charitable way of speaking, who stigmatizes many of the *Clergy* as Apostates, for not taking some of the *Doctrinal Articles* of the *Church* in the same sense that he did. (a) But if your Charge against 'em be true, it's plain they don't break the *Unity* of the *Church* on the account of such differences, and so the Case between them and you is far from being a Parallel one.

You say that the *Episcopal Clergy*, and their Hearers in *North-Britain*, are *Separatists* from the established *Church* there, and we don't reckon that *Church-Unity* is broken on that Account. No indeed, we do not, any more than we thought the *Unity* of the *Church* was broken by the *Episcopal Clergy*, and those that adhered to 'em in *England*, in the time of the *Usurpation* of *Oliver Cromwell*, when *Presbyterian Church Government* was settled in a great part of the Kingdom.

And now I'll answer your Question, why Dissenters should be thought so Criminal? Because they are so in Fact. Is there not a vast difference between holding Com-

---

(a) Sermon Preached upon the Union.

munion with the Church, notwithstanding some differences, and breaking the *Unity* of it, only on the Account of Circumstantialis in Religion, things that are allowed not to be sinful in their own Nature, but are quarrel'd at because they are imposed by a lawful Authority ? Consider seriously, I beseech you, whether the *Pleas* made use of by you in our Discourse, can warrant your Separation. It's plain they cannot in the Judgment of the Old *Non-conformists*, who, tho' they would not subscribe to the *Ceremonies*, yet they were against separation from the Publick Worship upon the account of 'em.

*Diff.* If the *Unity* of the *Church* be, as you say, at the Stake, why are not those things removed, which (though we reckon sinful) you your selves acknowledge to be but indifferent? (a) Let the rigid Imposers of *unlawful* and *unnecessary* things clear themselves if they are able. Men may talk as long as they will of *Church Unity*, and discover all the warmth imaginable in the defence of it ; if at the same time they obstinately refuse to part with a *Ceremony* for its sake, Standers by will conclude (and with very good reason) that they have it not so much at Heart, as they would make the World believe they have.

*Ch.* I am sorry you would not be so free as to speak your Mind fully and plainly before ; you insinuated as if you thought our terms of Communion sinful ; but now, in plain Terms you affirm it, and call them unnecessary and unlawful. I must beg of you to have a little patience, untill I examine your Argument. But first I must tell you, it would have been much fairer to have attempted to prove our terms of Communion unlawful, when we were talking about these particular things, rather than to affirm 'em to be so in general, and not so much as offer one Argument to prove your Assertion.

That I may clear the Church of *England* of that heavy Charge you have drawn up against her, viz. Of imposing *unnecessary* and *unlawful Terms of Communion*, I will briefly shew from the Writings of the most eminent *Non-conformists*, that the *Terms of Communion* with our *Church* (and they were the same then as they are now) are not unlawful. And first, I will take notice of what they say concerning the Church of *England* in general. The Old *Non-conformists*, in their confutation of the *Brownists*, say, " That the *Church of England* is a true Church of *Christ*,

(a) *Lay-Nonconformity Justified.* p. 43.

" and

" and such a one as from which whosoever wittingly and  
 " willingly separates himself, cutteth himself off from  
 " Christ. (a) We enjoy, say they, and joyn together in  
 " the use of those outward means, which God hath or-  
 " dained in His Word for the gathering a visible Church,  
 " and have been effectual in the unfeigned Conversion of  
 " many, as appears, both by the other Fruits of Faith,  
 " and by the *Martyrdom* which sundry have endured,  
 " that were Members of our Church, &c. The Worship  
 performed in the *Church of England*, is owned by Mr. *Hil-*  
*dersham* for the matter and substance of it, to be good, and  
 such as Men may be Edifyed by. (b)

The *Ministry* of the *Church* is allowed to be true by se-  
 veral of 'em: Mr. *Bradshaw* affirms, That the *Ministry* (how-  
 ever it may in some particular parts of the *Execution* hap-  
 ly be defective, in some places) is, for the substance of it,  
 that very same *Ministry* which *Christ* hath set in the *Church*.  
 This he speaks (as he saith) of those that do *Subscribe and Conform*, according to the *Law of the State*. (c) Mr. *Cotton* says, " The power whereby the *Ministers* in *England* do  
 " administer the *Word* and *Sacraments*, is either *Spiri-*  
 " *tual* and proper, Essential to their calling, or adven-  
 " *titious* and accidental. The former they have received  
 " from *Christ*. &c. the latter from the *Patron* who Pre-  
 " *sents*, or the *Bishop* who *Ordains*. (d) Other Authorities  
 to this purpose may easily be quoted, but are needless, be-  
 cause our *Dissenting Brethren* do all own that our *Clergy* are  
 true *Ministers*, that is, have a valid *Ordination*. So that  
 is not reckoned sinful. Now if the *Church of England* be  
 a true *Church*, the *Ministry* a true *Ministry*, the *Doctrine*  
 Sound and Orthodox, the *Worship* in the main, good and  
 allowable (all which things are owned by the most emi-  
 nent *Non-conformists*) then Communion with the *Church*  
 is at least lawful.

That it was not lawful to make a total Separation  
 from the *Church*, is equally plain from the *Writings* of  
 the *Nonconformists*; and this indeed is a natural Conse-  
 quence from their owning her to be a true *Church*.

Mr. *Brightman* saith, the Error of these Men is full  
 of Evil, who do in such a manner make a Departure

---

(a) *A grave and sober Consultation*. p. 1. &c. p. 57. (b) *Lecture 26 on John* p. 121. (c) *Unreasonableness of the Separation*. p. 16.  
 (d) *Cotton's Infant Baptism*. p. 181.

## 78 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &c.

from this Church (by total Separation) as if Christ were quite banished from hence, and that there could be no Hope of Salvation to those that abide there. (a) Mr. Baxter says, *I constantly join in my Parish-Church in Liturgy and Sacraments.* (b) Mr. Burroughs says, "to join in nothing, because they cannot join in all things, is a dividing Practice." (c) *The denying of Assent and Consent to all and every thing contained in the Book of Common-Prayer, doth not gainsay the lawfulness of partaking in that Worshipping, it being found for the Substance in the main, &c. as a judicious Person hath observed.* (d) Now since these eminent Persons will not allow of a total Separation from the *Church*, 'tis evident they did not believe the Terms of Communion to be sinful, for then they would certainly have defended a Total Separation.

I will next enquire what was their Opinion concerning *Forms of Prayer*, and I doubt not but I can make it appear, that they thought *Forms of Prayer* lawful. It is lawful to embrace Communion with Churches where publick Forms are in Use; neither doth it lie as a Duty on a Believer, that he disjoin and separate himself from such a Church, is the Opinion of one who was no great Friend to Forms of Prayer. (e) Mr. Baxter saith, "That that which is not directly or consequentially forbidden by God, remaineth lawful. A stunted Liturgy is not directly or consequentially forbidden of God, therefore it remaineth lawful." (f) Nothing but a Prohibition can make a Thing Unlawful; for where there is no Law, there can be no Transgression.

Speaking of our *Liturgy*, one of 'em says, "That the English Liturgy is gathered according to the Antients, the purest of 'em, and is not a Collection out of the Mass-Book (as some Dealers in Scandal falsely affirm) but a refining of that Liturgy, which heretofore had been stained with the Mass, &c. and is not a Translation of the Mass, but a Restitution of the Antient Liturgy." (g) The same Author affirms, "that the Christian Churches of Antient Times, for the space of this fourteen hundred Years at least, if not from the Apostles time, have had their Stinted Liturgies." (h) Is it not then a high Degree of Pride, to conclude that

(a) On *Revelations* chap. 3. (b) *Sacrileg.* p. 75. (c) Burrough's *Iren.* p. 182. (d) Corbet's *Plea for Lay-Communion, &c.* p. 2. (e) Norton's *Resp. ad Apol.* c. 13. (f) *Christian Directory.* p. 847. (g) Mr. Ball's *Tryal.* p. 155. (h) *Ibid.* p. 96, 106, &c. almost

almost all Christ's Churches in the World for these four-teen hundred Years at least, to this Day, have offered such Worship unto God, as that you are obliged to avoid it? and that almost all the Catholick Church on Earth this day, is below your Communion for using Forms? (a) These Instances are sufficient to my Purpose, viz. to prove that *Forms of Prayer* may lawfully be used in the Worship of God, and that our *Liturgy* in particular may lawfully be used. If you say that the imposing of it makes it sinful, I am at a loss to know by what sort of Arguments you'll prove, that Things in themselves *lawful*, change their Nature and become *sinful*, when required by a *lawful Authority*, and therefore I'll take no Notice of that, till you undertake to prove, it.

That there is not any thing Sinful in having *Sponsors* or *Sureties* in Baptism, I have sufficiently proved, when I answered your Objections against the Use of 'em. Mr. Baxter allows that they may be lawfully used, in his Answer to that Question he proposes in his Christian Directory, *What is the true Meaning of Sponsors or Godfathers, and is it lawful to make use of 'em?* to which I refer you. (b)

The same Author, in his forecited Book, says, "I dare not peremptorily say that the *Cross in Baptism* is unlawful." (c) And I will challenge you to produce one Authority from the Writings of the old *Nonconformists*, to prove that it is lawful to make a Separation on the Account of that Ceremony. I will only lay before you the Opinion of one or two Persons about kneeling at the Sacrament, and then I'll conclude.

Mr. Baxter says, "I never yet heard any thing to prove Kneeling unlawful, there is no Word of God for or against any Gesture. (d) I am not certain that Christ intended the Example of himself in this as obligatory, but I am sure he hath commanded me *Obedience and Peace.*" (e) It is granted by Mr. Tomb, that the Gesture used at the Institution does not oblige us, because this Gesture seems not to have been of Choice used by Christ; and St. Paul says nothing of the Gesture, which he would certainly have done, had it been binding. (f) Mr. Bains says, "Kneeling is not unbecoming a Feaster, when our Joy must be mingled with reverent Trembling." (g) These Instances, with such

(a) Mr. Baxter's *Sacril. desert.* p. 102. (b) *Christian Directory.* p. 814. (c) *Ibid.* p. 418. (d) *Ibid.* p. 616. (e) *Defence.* p. 177. (f) Tomb's *Theodulia.* p. 168. (g) *Christian Letters.* Let. 24. p. 201.

## 85 The L A Y - M A N ' S P L E A S , &amp;c.

as I have already mentioned before, are sufficient to shew the Lawfulness of Kneeling at the Sacrament. And thus I have briefly run thro' all the Usages in our Church, which can be thought unlawful (Bowing at the Name of Jesus, Standing up at the Gospel, &c. may be disliked, but there are hardly any so grossly ignorant as to affirm that these Gestures are sinful.) and have proved that they are not condemned as Unlawful, by the most Eminent Nonconformists.

If you ask why (seeing we reckon these things *Indifferent*) they are not laid aside, to promote that *Unity* which we complain is broken by your *Separation*: I'll leave the answering that Question to the Governors of our Church. Only this I may venture to say, that no considerable Body of *Dissenters*, will ever be brought into the *Church*, by such Alterations as you plead for. Nothing less than a total Subversion of the Constitution will oblige those *Eminent Divines* who complain that they are wrongfully and unjustly kept out of the Church, because they never had a Bishop's Hand upon 'em. (a) God be thanked, the Governors of our Church are not enclin'd to give up an Apostolical Constitution, confirm'd by the concurring Sense and Practice of all the Fathers, out of Complaisance to those Persons who make our having *Bishops* one Article for Schism, which their pretended Patron St. Jerome makes decreed by the Apostles, for the Extirpation of the Seeds of *Schism* all the world over.

I have now gone through all your Objections against our Church, and I declare I cannot see any thing in 'em to justify *Lay-Nonconformity*.

If you have any other Arguments to vindicate your Practice, which you could not now remember (provided they only affect the Case of Lay-Nonconformity) I'll do my best to give you a satisfactory Answer to 'em.

*Diff.* Sir, I heartily thank you. As to what you have offer'd against Separation, it shall be consider'd as soon as I have an Opportunity; and it may be one time or other you may have the Result of my Thoughts. But now I must take my Leave of you, having staid much longer than I intended. Sir, God be with you.

*Church.* And with you, Sir : I thank you for your Company, and it shall be my constant Prayer, That God would bring into the Way of Truth, you, and all others that have erred and are deceived.

5 OCT 59

(a) *Lay Non-Conformity Justified*, p. 13. 39.

